

last will and testament to the country he loved. In early April, he and a number of other prominent military critics of the Iraq War were called to give Congressional testimony. All criticized the occupation and urged a rapid American withdrawal, but Odom went farther. He said that without prompt action, Baghdad could become America's Dien Bien Phu, where superior French forces were surrounded, trapped, cut off from supplies, and ultimately destroyed by Vietnamese guerrillas.

The comparison is not as absurd as it might seem. America possesses a powerful force in Iraq, but, as military analyst William Lind has repeatedly emphasized, that force is almost entirely dependent on a long and slender supply line from Kuwait, which runs through territory controlled by Shi'ite forces friendly to Iran. Some 500 tanker trucks of fuel must reach the American Army each day for it to maintain operational mobility. If widespread guerrilla action were to reduce substantially the number or transit speed of those convoys, America's advantage in advanced hardware—our primary strength—would become increasingly irrelevant.

Under such a scenario, any American president who finally issued a command to withdraw would be forced to abandon vast amounts of military hardware, thereby publicly formalizing the greatest defeat in American history. But any president who did not issue such a humiliating withdrawal order would risk the total loss of America's huge expeditionary force. That result would rank with the greatest military disasters in all history—enormously worse than Dien Bien Phu, and comparable in scale to the doomed Sicilian Expedition of the Athenians.

As a serious scholar, Bill Odom knew his Thucydides. But the country he leaves behind does not. ■

The fighting between Georgia and Russia is yet another U.S. foreign-policy disaster in which Washington might have encouraged a war where there was no conceivable American interest. It is also, by all accounts, the latest major intelligence failure. When Tbilisi staged its surprise attack into South Ossetia, the United States had no less than 130 soldiers and Defense Department contractors training the Georgian forces through the embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation. Some were actually U.S. Army intelligence officers educating the Georgian army in their craft. There was also a CIA station and an embassy political section tasked with developing confidential relationships with Georgia's political leadership. U.S. Ambassador John Tefft reportedly could drop in on President Mikheil Saakashvili any time he wished to do so.

In addition to the American contingent, the Israelis had a very large presence providing \$500 million worth of equipment and training to the Georgians, funded through two U.S. assistance programs. The Israeli media has been reporting that there were hundreds of former military officers working as trainers in Georgia.

This version of a greater Caucasus co-prosperity sphere was greased by an estimated \$2 billion in U.S. assistance used to maintain and upgrade the Georgian military, partially to enable it to serve in Iraq but also to protect the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and confront nonexistent al-Qaeda elements in the Pankisi Gorge. The assistance program involved frequent interaction with all levels of the Georgian military, but the Americans and Israelis did not know what Tbilisi was up to, though invading a country even on a small scale is no turnkey operation. Planning and preparation involving thousands of Georgians went apparently unnoticed by the many foreign observers in the country.

The U.S. advisers were withdrawn to Tbilisi, and the Israelis were evacuated back to their own country after fighting broke out, leaving so quickly that they abandoned their classified training materials. When Moscow counterattacked, the United States found itself equally blind in spite of a large CIA station and diplomatic presence in Russia. Are there any spies here? Apparently not.

A rough after-action assessment of the intelligence failure both in Russia and in Georgia reveals the usual problems. Spy satellites, which might have detected the movement of troops, were instead watching Iraq and Afghanistan. Lacking language and cultural skills, the U.S. intelligence community relied on its Georgian counterparts to provide the information that it needed. When the friendly liaison service has something to conceal, such information becomes disinformation. Diplomats and military officers, meanwhile, uncritically accepted what their Georgian interlocutors were telling them. The Israelis were also apparently too busy turning a buck to notice what was going on. One Israeli officer returned from Georgia noting that the training had been perfunctory because turning trainees over rapidly provided opportunities to make more money. Both Israeli and American instructors agreed that the frequently illiterate Georgian conscripts were poor soldiers, led by mediocre officers and unfit for any military action, but they were reluctant to report their observations because they would not have been well received in Washington and Tel Aviv.

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Unpatriotic Conservative

Who is Randy Scheunemann? He is the principal foreign-policy adviser to John McCain and potential successor to Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski as

national security adviser to the president of the United States.

But Randy Scheunemann has another identity. He is a dual loyalist, a foreign agent whose assignment is to get America committed to spilling the blood of her sons for client regimes who have made this moral mercenary a rich man.

From January 2007 to March 2008, the McCain campaign paid Scheunemann \$70,000—pocket change compared to the \$290,000 his Orion Strategies banked in those same 15 months from the Georgian regime of Mikheil Saakashvili.

What were Mikheil's marching orders to Tbilisi's man in Washington? Get Georgia a NATO war guarantee. Get America committed to fight Russia, if necessary, on behalf of Georgia.

Scheunemann came close to succeeding. Had he done so, U.S. soldiers and Marines from Idaho would be killing Russians in the Caucasus and dying to protect Scheunemann's client. That people like Scheunemann hire out to put American lives on the line for their clients is a classic corruption of American democracy.

U.S. backing for his campaign to retrieve his lost provinces is what Saakashvili paid Scheunemann to produce. But why should Americans fight Russians to force 70,000 South Ossetians back into the custody of a regime they detest? Why not let the South Ossetians decide their own future in free elections?

Not only is the folly of the Bush interventionist policy on display in the Caucasus, so, too, is its manifest incoherence.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates says we have sought for 45 years to stay out of a shooting war with Russia, and we are not going to get into one now. President Bush assured us there would be no U.S. military response to the Russian move into Georgia.

That is a recognition of reality—namely, that Russia's control of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and occupation of a strip of Georgia cannot be a *casus belli* for the United States. We may deplore it, but it cannot justify war with Russia.

If that be true, and it transparently is, what are McCain, Obama, Bush, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel doing committing the United States and Germany to bringing Georgia into NATO? For that would commit us to war for a cause we have already conceded, by our paralysis, does not justify a war.

Not only has Scheunemann's two-man lobbying firm received \$730,000 since 2001 to get Georgia a NATO war guarantee, he was paid by Romania and Latvia to do the same. And he succeeded.

Latvia, a tiny Baltic republic annexed by Joseph Stalin in June 1940 during his pact with Adolf Hitler, was set free at the end of the Cold War. Yet hundreds of thousands of Russians had been moved into Latvia by Stalin, and as Riga served as a base of the Baltic Sea fleet, many Russian naval officers retired there.

The children and grandchildren of these Russians are Latvian citizens. They are a cause of tension with ethnic Letts and of strife with Moscow, which has assumed the role of protector of Russians left in the "near abroad" when

the Soviet Union broke apart.

Thanks to the lobbying of Scheunemann and friends, Latvia has been brought into NATO and given a U.S. war guarantee. If Russia intervenes to halt some nasty ethnic violence in Riga, the United States is committed to come in and drive the Russians out.

This is the situation in which the interventionists have placed our country: committed to going to war for causes that do not justify war against a Russia that is re-emerging as a great power only to find NATO squatting on her doorstep.

Scheunemann's résumé as a War Party apparatchik is lengthy. He signed the Project for the New American Century letter to President Clinton urging war on Iraq, four years before 9/11. He signed the PNAC ultimatum to Bush, nine days after 9/11, threatening him with political reprisal if he did not go to war against Iraq. He was executive director of the "Committee for the Liberation of Iraq," a propaganda front for Ahmad Chalabi and his pack of liars who deceived us into war.

Now Scheunemann is the neocon agent in place in McCain's camp. The neocons got their war with Iraq. They are pushing for war on Iran. And they are now baiting the Russian Bear. Why would McCain seek foreign-policy counsel from the same discredited crowd that has all but destroyed the presidency of George W. Bush?

"Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence ... a free people ought to be constantly awake," Washington said in his Farewell Address. Our Founding Father was warning against the Randy Scheunemanns among us, agents hired by foreign powers to deceive Americans into fighting their wars. And none dare call it treason. ■