Winning the war on terrorism

If all goes well, Knopf will publish a new book of mine this coming winter. A title has yet to be settled, though in my working drafts I currently call it: All Leave is Cancelled Tonight: The War Against Terror. Suggestions for a better title are welcome.

The book is structured around four basic themes. First, that we must redefine what we mean by warfare, by terrorism, and by victory if we are to understand how the war on global terrorism is different from past conflicts, and how it can be won. Otherwise, the phrase “war on terrorism” is little more than a speech writer’s metaphor, like the war on drugs or the war on crime. Second, that our current domestic debate on the constitutional limits on the Executive in such a war both understates the threat of terrorism and overstates the Executive’s authority to deal with this threat. Third, that international law, though at present inadequate to cope with the challenges presented by global terrorism, can be reformed to provide indispensable assistance in this war. And fourth, that the criteria of winning and losing must be carefully defined, because the traditional measures of success in war are largely unsuitable to us.

Each of these themes introduces one of the four parts of the book and each part concludes with particular recommendations—a mix of policy prescriptions and some effort to rethink the fundamentals of how we might actually win a war against global terrorism. Here is an excerpt from the Introduction. It follows a discussion of some of policy prescriptions and some effort to rethink the fundamentals of winning and losing must be carefully defined, because the traditional measures of success in war are largely unsuitable to us.

THE FIRST OF THESE UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS was the commodification of weapons of mass destruction. There arose a market, though a clandestine one, in these weapons, which grew ever cheaper. States no longer had to be rich to develop WMD and thus need not be great powers, rendering the great power consensus of less significance. Indeed, this new vulnerability should not be confused with that of an industrial plant by aerial bombing. This new vulnerability should not be confused with that of an industrial plant by aerial bombing. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

Winning the war on terrorism

If all goes well, Knopf will publish a new book of mine this coming winter. A title has yet to be settled, though in my working drafts I currently call it: All Leave is Cancelled Tonight: The War Against Terror. Suggestions for a better title are welcome.

The book is structured around four basic themes. First, that we must redefine what we mean by warfare, by terrorism, and by victory if we are to understand how the war on global terrorism is different from past conflicts, and how it can be won. Otherwise, the phrase “war on terrorism” is little more than a speech writer’s metaphor, like the war on drugs or the war on crime. Second, that our current domestic debate on the constitutional limits on the Executive in such a war both understates the threat of terrorism and overstates the Executive’s authority to deal with this threat. Third, that international law, though at present inadequate to cope with the challenges presented by global terrorism, can be reformed to provide indispensable assistance in this war. And fourth, that the criteria of winning and losing must be carefully defined, because the traditional measures of success in war are largely unsuitable to us.

Each of these themes introduces one of the four parts of the book and each part concludes with particular recommendations—a mix of policy prescriptions and some effort to rethink the fundamentals of how we might actually win a war against global terrorism. Here is an excerpt from the Introduction. It follows a discussion of some of policy prescriptions and some effort to rethink the fundamentals of winning and losing must be carefully defined, because the traditional measures of success in war are largely unsuitable to us.

THE FIRST OF THESE UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS was the commodification of weapons of mass destruction. There arose a market, though a clandestine one, in these weapons, which grew ever cheaper. States no longer had to be rich to develop WMD and thus need not be great powers, rendering the great power consensus of less significance. Indeed, this new vulnerability should not be confused with that of an industrial plant by aerial bombing. This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.

This new vulnerability should not be confused with that arising from the spread of WMD. The atrocities on September 11th were not perpetrated by persons using sophisticated weapons; rather they were made possible because we had assembled an immense array of talent and capital and put this glittering assemblage inside a few large buildings. The vulnerability I have in mind is a direct consequence of the dramatic change in terrorism that occurred at the end of the 20th century, but they are quite consonant with the decay of the nation-state (of which they are important drivers) and the emergence of the market-state. These weapons; rather they were made possible because we have destroyed the tank manufacturing plant run by General Motors. But today, and increasingly tomorrow, just such a boy (or girl) will be able to hack into the computerized supervisory systems that control gas pipelines, phone networks, electrical grids and electronic banking at a cost to the society of amounts of wealth not dissimilar to the destruction of an industrial plant by aerial bombing.