

## A Response to George Michael's "Is a Greater Russia Really so Bad?"

(Military Review, January-February 2015)

Dear Sir or Ma'am,  
After carefully reading this essay, I suspect the author is either misinformed or he is wishfully thinking. The title is a hook to make you read it and start a debate.

The author is trying to empathize with Mr. Putin's motives for invading other countries. Paraphrasing Mr. Michael's conclusion, Russia is acting this way out of self-preservation. The fallacy of this argument is simple. It was made by others in history, and it never stood the test of time. Russia is too big to be successfully invaded. It has enough natural resources, and there are no external existential threats to the Russian state.

"The bitterness Russia harbors toward the United States" is the result of a Russian toxic propaganda, through TV, newspapers, social media, or online forums. It is not something that an American administration triggered. It is solely the result of an orchestrated

"Mother Russia" versus the "morally corrupt West" mentality that the current Russian leaders have.

It is true that Russia and United States have many common interests. But those are being pushed aside by the blunt force and sheer aggressiveness of Russian behavior. There are more threats involving nuclear power from Russia than threats from North Korea every week. And the author is suggesting to turn the other cheek? We are already in another cold war, like it or not. A new arms race will benefit neither, but the United States can sustain one, while Russia cannot.

The time of trying to give pieces of independent countries to Russia to keep the Bear fed and content has passed. The only

way to deal with this is through an intelligent containment policy, maintaining a healthy technological advantage, and (why not) reviving Reagan Star Wars.

Thank you.

**Maj. Marius Tecoanta**  
**Oregon National Guard**



**"Is a Greater Russia Really So Bad?,"** George Michael, PhD

The author contends that the United States and Russia share similar threats to their long-term security and their national identities. Therefore, it would be in the best interests of both countries to resist a resumption of the Cold War, to reconcile differences, and to make a greater effort to understand their respective points of view and interests.

The original article can be found in our January-February 2015 issue on page 99 by clicking on the link for the electronic version or by clicking on the article cover for the Joomag version.

[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20150228\\_art018.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150228_art018.pdf)

# A Response to Matthew T. Penney's "The Anbar Awakening in Context... and Why it is Hard to Replicate"

(*Military Review*, March-April 2015)

I was pleased to see the excellent article on the Anbar Awakening in the March-April issue of *Military Review*. It did a wonderful job recapping the discussion on how the Awakening unfolded.

Unfortunately, the discussion of the unique conditions which led to the Awakening was left for serious students of the movement who survey literature on the subject. I find such literature hard to find. Thus, I piece together the few bits of information I have received to try to construct a scenario which begs for a serious critique.

The crux of what I have gathered from one Army officer I know who served in 2006 is that Anbar leaders were motivated by the need for income after funds distributed by the American forces for civil affairs-type programs were put under much tighter control. I can believe this could have been the cause since many articles in *Military Review* have explained conflict in Iraq as arising from economic conditions.

I have a hard time believing Anbar leaders started working with American troops because they were repulsed by the brutality of extremist factions in Iraq, since they seemed to embrace these faction so widely once again in 2014. However, just as former Ba'athist party loyalists reacted violently when their pensions were cut off by the American occupation forces in 2003, they again reacted violently in 2014 after being economically marginalized by their own government.

I also look at who the leaders of the American forces in Iraq were from 2004 until 2006, the year the Anbar Awakening started. Gen. Casey was the senior commander of forces in Iraq for most of this period. I never heard him described as having a strong focus on economic matters in Iraq.

In contrast, Gen. Chiarelli, as the commander over forces in Sadr City in 2004, had a strong focus on economic issues, going so far as to cause a massive reallocation of money for contracted projects in his area of control. He credits these economic measures as critical for his success in suppressing the uprising in Sadr City that greeted him when he arrived with his forces in 2004.

In 2006, Gen. Chiarelli arrived in Iraq to once again be faced with a massive uprising after the bombing of the Golden Mosque. While forces under his command did plenty of fighting, Chiarelli put a great emphasis on expanding employment opportunities for the Iraqis. When the discussion of surge troops came up in late 2006, Chiarelli responded, "I don't need more troops, I need more jobs." Of course, jobs are what was created in reaction to the Anbar Awakening as former enemies were put on the payroll.

Once again, this is all conjecture. It would be nice for *Military Review* to publish a piece describing how much of economic impetus there was for the Anbar Awakening.

Thanks.

**John Stettler, Dallas, Texas**



**"The Anbar Awakening in Context ... and Why It Is so Hard to Replicate,"** Matthew T. Penney, PhD

The author proposes the Anbar Awakening be used as a template for developing counterinsurgency programs elsewhere as long as the differences in culture and situational context in such efforts are accounted for. The author provides an analysis of the Awakening and explains how its lessons can be applied in the future.

The original article can be found in our March-April 2015 issue on page 106, by clicking on the link for the electronic version, or by clicking on the article cover for the Joomag version.

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