

# PROFILE: PETER BROOKES

By RICHARD H. WAGNER

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One of the most valuable roles the press can play is to tell people what they do not want to hear. People have a natural inclination to want to focus on their own lives and reports of unpleasant events and malicious forces elsewhere in the world are a distraction. This was particularly true after the end of the long Cold War, which seemed to be the dawn of a more harmonious world order. However, as the attacks of September 11, 2001 demonstrated, all of the sinister forces in the world have not been vanquished and cannot be ignored.

Peter Brookes, the recipient of this year's Frank Knox Media Award, in his writing and in his appearances, has repeatedly pointed out such inconvenient facts and in the process has deflated many neo-isolationist arguments that all would be well with the world if the United States just stayed home.

Iraq is foremost in most people's minds when it comes to world trouble-spots. To many, the solution to this seemingly endless tragedy would be for the United States to withdraw. However, in a recent article for the New York Post, Brookes reviewed the National Intelligence Estimate for Iraq and outlined the potential for a much wider war if the U.S. simply abandons its commitment. "[Iran] already has ties to Shiite militias, and naked ambitions to spread its revolution; it could claim it was protecting its Shiite 'co-religionists'

against Sunni attacks. Sunni Arab states like Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, might intervene in the name of protecting the (minority) Iraqi Sunnis against the (majority) Shiites - especially those Iranian-backed militias. This scenario could easily lead to a major regional war between Sunni and Shia - or Arabs and Persians. Whoever won, oil prices would likely skyrocket." Furthermore, Turkey, which has a history of bad relations with its Kurdish citizens, might be drawn into a war if the Iraqi Kurds declare independence or increase their autonomy.



*On 14 March, Peter Brookes received the Frank Knox Media Award from the New York Council of the Navy League of the United States. He is seen here with his wife Khris and Lt. General Ronald S. Coleman, USMC. (Photo: R.H. Wagner).*

"The NIE also notes that al Qaeda might use parts of Iraq - such as restless al Anbar province - to plan and launch attacks inside and outside Iraq.

Another horrifying possibility - especially considering Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al Zawahiri's encouragement of attacks beyond Iraq."

"And the report seems to conclude that the deteriorating situation in Iraq is salvageable - if Iraq develops stronger leadership and sees a turnaround in its security situation and economic development. That seems to be where the president is heading - if Congress lets him implement his plan. Given the nightmares that might grow from U.S. failure in Iraq, talk of cutting off funding is downright misguided. Iraq is tough - no doubt. But members of Congress need to take the new NIE into account in their deliberations. They also need to ensure that any action they take doesn't discourage our brave troops - or enable our enemies."

Iran is widely recognized as hostile to the United States. However, many view this hostility as a result of the United States' refusal to engaged Iran directly. But, the facts belie such a conclusion. Reporting on recent testimony before Congress by Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, Brookes noted: "The [Iranian] regime is encouraged by the demise of such enemies as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam in Iraq, and buoyed by vast increases in oil/gas revenues from elevated global demand and prices in recent years. Also pumping up Persian power and morale, said the DNI, were Hamas' electoral victory last January and Hezbollah's showing in its conflict with Israel this past summer. (Tehran must be giddy about Hezbollah keeping Lebanon on the rocks, too.) The intelligence community concludes Iran sees its ability to conduct terrorism abroad as key to its national security strategy, helping to: 1) deter

U.S. and Israeli intervention in Iran, 2) intimidate its neighbors and 3) drive the U.S. from the region.

China seemingly has abandoned its Cultural Revolution and has become a western-style economic powerhouse manufacturing many of the goods that Americans use in their everyday lives. With this growing economic interdependence, many people have difficulty viewing China as a military threat to America. However, after China's recent test of an anti-satellite weapon, Mr. Brookes wrote that the test: "calls into question China's mantra that its unprecedented military buildup is for self-defense, that its rise to world power will be peaceful. It's a threat to no one - and it will only use space for peaceful purposes. . . The PRC also understands U.S. military dependence on our space infrastructure. Without spy and communications satellites, our forces would be left essentially deaf, dumb and blind - on a suddenly level battlefield with a (previously) less capable adversary, a shrewd example of the promise of asymmetric warfare.

"Bottom line: China is on a trajectory to challenge Washington (and Moscow) for preeminence in space. The ASAT test is a wake-up call. Protecting our space assets - and freedom of action on the high frontier - must be central to our national security strategy."

In addition, Brookes has noted: "The PRC has the world's third-largest intelligence apparatus (after the United States and Russia), and it's targeting America's governmental, military and high technology secrets." The Chinese are using their diplomatic missions, individual students and workers, and according to the FBI, some 3,500 front companies, to carry on espionage in the United States. "China's goal is to

replace the U.S. as the preeminent power in the Pacific -- even globally. It's using every method possible, including espionage, to improve its political, economic and, especially, military might."

What about Russia? Now that the communists are gone and its military weakened by neglect, Russia surely poses no threat. Brookes has pointed out: "Russia is now the world's biggest arms merchant to the developing world. In some cases, these sales seriously undermine American interests and security - and threaten U.S. forces." In addition to building Iran's first nuclear reactor, Russia has delivered \$1 billion in TorM-1 air defense missiles to that country. Similarly, North Korea's nuclear weapons program got its start from the Russians. "Moscow inked \$3 billion in arms deals with Castro-wannabe Hugo Chavez for advanced fighters, helicopters and other weapons. And China? Someday, China - using advanced Russian weapons - might cross swords with the United States over Taiwan's future. Moscow sells billions in arms to Beijing, and recently agreed to cooperate with the Chinese space program."

Peter Brookes is a Senior Fellow at the Heritage Foundation. In that role, he develops and communicates Heritage's stance on foreign policy and national security affairs through media appearances, research, published articles, congressional testimony and speaking engagements. He also serves as a Commissioner on the congressionally-mandated U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission ([www.uscc.gov](http://www.uscc.gov)).

In addition, he is a weekly columnist for the nation's 5th largest newspaper, the New York Post. His

column also runs in several other domestic and foreign newspapers, including the Boston Herald, Daily Yomiuri (Japan) and China Post (Taiwan), and on numerous news and opinion-oriented websites. Brookes is a regular contributor to Armed Forces Journal, and has had his byline in over 50 newspapers, journals and magazines. He is the author of: *A Devil's Triangle: Terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction and Rogue States* (Rowman & Littlefield, hardback 2005, paperback 2007).

Brookes has made over 500 appearances as a commentator on TV and radio, appearing on ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, NPR, BBC and CBC, VOA services, Al Hurra, and Radio Free Asia, among others. He has been quoted by many of the world's largest newspapers and magazines. He is also a frequent public speaker both in the U.S. and overseas, including public diplomacy speaking tours for the State Department in Japan, Germany, Australia, Poland and Ukraine. He has testified numerous times before both the Senate and House of Representatives on foreign policy, defense and intelligence issues as an administration official and as a private citizen.

Before coming to Heritage, Brookes served in the George W. Bush administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs, where he was responsible for U.S. security and defense policy for 38 countries and 5 bilateral defense alliances in the Asia-Pacific region.

Prior to joining the Bush administration, he worked as a Professional Staff Member with the Committee on International Relations in

the House of Representatives. He also served with the CIA's Directorate of Operations. Just prior to his CIA service, he worked for the State Department at the United Nations, and in the private sector in the defense industry. He has also served in political positions at the local, state and national level, including being one of the drafters of the 2000 foreign policy platform at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia.

Brookes served on active duty with the Navy in Latin America, Asia, and Middle East in aviation and intelligence billets during the Cold War. He has over 1300 flight hours aboard Navy EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft. Now a retired Commander, during his reserve career he served with the NSA, DIA, Naval Intelligence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the Vice President, working as an intelligence analyst, strategic debriefer, Russian-language interpreter, defense attaché and associate professor at DIA's Joint Military Intelligence College. His personal awards and decorations include: the Joint Service Commendation Medal; the Navy Commendation Medal (3 awards); the Navy Achievement Medal; several naval and joint unit awards; the Defense Language Institute's Kellogg Award; the Joint Chiefs of Staff service badge; and Naval Aviation Observer (NAO) wings.

Commander Brookes is currently pursuing a Doctorate in international affairs/history at Georgetown University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (B.S., Engineering); the Defense Language Institute (Diploma, Russian/Kellogg Award winner); the Naval War College (Diploma); and the Johns Hopkins University (M.A., Government).