

For your review:

Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters (USA, Ret.) was assigned, prior to his retirement, to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, where he was responsible for future warfare.

He retired shortly after being promoted to Lt Col in order to pursue a writing career. Career and personal travels have taken him to 45 countries. He has published and lectured widely on military and international concerns. His seventh novel, *The Devil's Garden*, was recently released by Avon Books. He has written many articles for *PARAMETERS*, the US Army War College Quarterly.

Ralph Peters has been called "the thinking man's Tom Clancy" by the *Wall Street Journal*. He has written many books about the military, both fact and fiction.

Ralph Peters is quoted. His article from *Parameters*, Spring 1998 (quarterly publication from Army War College) "Spotting the Losers: Seven Signs of Noncompetitive States" is very worthwhile and informative reading.

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A CASE FOR WAR will not attempt to explain the reasons for attacking Iraq because Iraq is part of a bigger picture, and the attack there will be one battle in a much longer war. Trying to understand one particular battle without the context of the larger war is an exercise in futility. (By analogy: what excuse is there in 1942 for the US to attack Vichy France in Morocco? Vichy France wasn't our enemy; Germany and Italy were. Taken out of the context of the larger war, the Torch landings in Africa make little sense. It's only when you look at the bigger picture of the whole war that you can understand them.)

We must attack Iraq. We must totally conquer the nation. Saddam must be removed from power, and killed if possible, and the Baath party must be shattered.

But Saddam isn't our enemy. bin Laden (may he burn in hell) is not our enemy. Iraq isn't our enemy. al Qaeda isn't our enemy. The Taliban weren't our enemies. They are merely symptoms of decay.

In most wars, there's a government or core organization which you can identify as the enemy. It isn't always a single person; in World War II it was Hitler and Mussolini in Europe, but it wasn't Tojo in Japan. Tojo was deposed in 1944, but the war went on. It also wasn't Hirohito; he mostly kept his hands off of policy. Still, it was the Japanese government, and that could still be understood. But in this war there is no single government or small group of them, no man, no organization. Our enemy is a culture which is deeply diseased.

It's really difficult to exactly delineate who our enemies are, but they number in millions. They're Arab and Muslim, but not every Arab is among them, and most Muslims are not. But even to discuss it in these terms is to cross the boundaries of political correctness. Not that I care, but it isn't politically possible for our leaders to say things like these, which makes the political wrangling all the more difficult. I think that they know what I'm about to say, and I at least am free to say what I believe whether others find it offensive or racist.

Islam is larger than greater Arabia, and the majority of Muslims are not Arab. But in the beginning, Islam was both a religion and a political movement. The Qur'an is a source of moral teachings for everyday life, telling people how to live and how to act towards one another. But it's also a manual for conquest, describing how to face enemies, how to fight, how to treat those who have been conquered, how to treat prisoners, how to treat enemy soldiers.

It lays a dual obligation on Muslims: to live a good life and to spread Islam to the entire world, by any means necessary. All successful widespread religions are evangelistic to a greater or lesser extent (with Judaism being the notable exception), but I know of no other major religion whose holy teachings include instructions for how to go to war to spread the faith.

Until Mohammed, the Arab tribes were divided and spent most of their time fighting one another. The great achievement of Mohammed was to unite the Arabs and face them outwards, strengthened and given will by his new religion. And for two hundred years, nothing could stand in their way; they created one of the great empires in the history of the world which was bounded on the south by the Sahara, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by Christendom, and on the east by the Hindu nations.

Extending from Spain to Iran, from Turkey to Egypt it was much larger and more powerful than was the Roman Empire before it, and it lasted longer. Within its borders art and science and poetry and architecture flourished. But like all empires, it eventually fell. Unlike other empires, this was against the word of God, for the Qur'an says that Islam will eventually dominate the entire world. In reality, it's been in retreat for more than three hundred years, and its decline became far more precipitous with the collapse of the Ottomans. Once-great Arab nations became little more than colonies for heathen Europeans, or economic dependents of America.

Our enemy is those who inherit the culture and heritage of that

empire. Not everyone within the empire's physical realm now partakes of that culture, but many do. I am having a difficult time coming up with a pithy term for our enemy. It's hard. It isn't really greater Arabia. It certainly isn't Islam. Islamic fundamentalism is a symptom of it, not the core. Arab nationalism and imperialism is also a symptom of it, not the core. Each of those can and does exist without the other, but they're both expressions of the real enemy we face, something deeper than that.

To refer to it as Arab nostalgia is wrong, for many of those within the body of our enemy inherit the beliefs and dogma which make them our enemies without knowing where they came from. They aren't necessarily traditionalists, for the same reason, though that's perhaps closer. I'm afraid I'm going to have to use the partly-fallacious term "Arab culture", accepting that not all Arab culture is our enemy and not all Arabs are among our enemies.

Our enemy holds to a traditional belief, a traditional culture. Islam is a core piece of that, but it isn't the whole thing, and not everyone who believes in Islam is part of the enemy. Our enemy is the majority of the people who live in what we think of as the large Arab nations, plus certain other groups. Our enemy is concentrated in Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, plus the Palestinians are part of it. There are lesser concentrations of our enemy in Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Oman and (non-Arab) Pakistan. And Iran is, as usual, a complicated aspect of it. While not being Arab, it is closer culturally to the Arabs, and to a great extent our enemy also holds sway there. The traditionalists and theocrats in Iran are part of our enemy, even though not being Arab, because Persian Iran was a key part of the original Arab/Islamic empire, and still retains much of that culture.

The problem with our enemy's culture is that in the 20th century it was revealed as being an abject failure. By any rational calculation, it could not compete, and not simply because the deck was stacked against it. The problem was more fundamental; the culture itself contained the elements of its own failure. The only Arab nations which have prospered have done so entirely because of the accident of mineral wealth. Using money from export of oil, they imported a high tech infrastructure. They drive western cars. They use western cell phones. They built western high-rise steel frame buildings. They created superhighways and in every way implemented the trappings of western prosperity. Or rather, they paid westerners to create all those things for them.

They didn't build or create any of it themselves. It's all parasitic. And they also buy the technical skill to keep it running. The technological infrastructure of Saudi Arabia (to take an example) is run

by a small army of western engineers and technicians and managers who are paid well, and who live in isolation, and who keep it all working. If they all leave, the infrastructure will collapse. Saudi Arabia does not have the technical skill to run it, or the ability to produce the replacement parts which would be needed. It's all a sham, and they know it. Everything they have which looks like modern culture was purchased. They themselves do not have the ability to produce, or even to operate, any of it.

The diseased culture of our enemy suffers from all seven of the deep flaws Ralph Peters identifies as condemning nations to failure in the modern world. Peters makes a convincing case that there is a correlation approaching unity between the extent to which a nation or culture suffers from these flaws and its inability to succeed in the 21st century. He lists them as follows: Restrictions on the free flow of information. The subjugation of women. Inability to accept responsibility for individual or collective failure. The extended family or clan as the basic unit of social organization. Domination by a restrictive religion. A low valuation of education. Low prestige assigned to work. And carrying all seven of these, our enemy is trying to compete in the 21st century footrace with both feet cast into buckets of concrete. They are profoundly handicapped by the very values that they hold most dear and that they believe make them what they are.

The nations and the peoples within the zone of our enemy's culture are complete failures. Their economies are disasters. They make no contribution to the advance of science or engineering. They make no contribution to art or culture. They have no important diplomatic power. They are not respected. Most of their people are impoverished and miserable and filled with resentment, and those who are not impoverished are living a lie. They hate us. They hate us because our culture is everything theirs is not.

Our culture is vibrant and fecund; our economies are successful. Our achievements are magnificent. Our engineering and science are advancing at breathtaking speed. Our people are fat and happy (relatively speaking). We are influential, we are powerful, we are wealthy. "We" are the western democracies, but in particular "we" are the United States, which is the most successful of the western democracies by a long margin. America is the most successful nation in the history of the world, economically and technologically and militarily and even culturally.

Our culture as exported is condemned as being lowbrow in many places, but it's hard to deny how pervasive and influential it is. Baywatch was total wreck, but it was also the most successful syndicated television

program around the world in history, racking up truly massive audiences each week. Our culture is seductive on every level; those elsewhere who are exposed to it find it attractive. It isn't always "high culture"; but some of it is, and with the world revolution in telecommunications it's impossible for anyone in the world to avoid seeing it and being exposed to it.

Nor can anyone ignore our technology, which is definitely not lowbrow, nor our scientific achievements. We're everything that they think they should be, everything they once were, and by our power and success we throw their modern failure into stark contrast, especially because we've gotten to where we are by doing everything their religion says is wrong. We've deeply sinned, and yet we've won. They are forced to compare their own accomplishments to ours because we are the standard of success, and in every important way they come up badly short. In most of the contests it's not just that our score is higher, it's that their score is zero. They have nothing whatever they can point to that can save face and preserve their egos. In every practical objective way we are better than they are, and they know it.

And since this is a "face" culture, one driven by pride and shame, that is intolerable. Nor is it something we can easily redress. The oft-proposed idea of increasing aid and attempting to eliminate poverty may well help in South America and sub-Saharan Africa, but it will not defuse the hatred of our Arab/Islamic enemies, for it is our success that they hate, not the fruits of that success.

It isn't that they also want to be rich. Indeed, the majority of the most militant members of al Qaeda came from Saudi Arabia, out of comfortable existence. What they want is to stay with their traditional culture and for it to be successful, and that isn't possible. We can make them rich through aid, but we can't make them successful because their failure is not caused by us, but by the deep flaws in their culture. Their culture cannot succeed. It is too deeply and fundamentally crippled.

Everything they think they know says that they should be successful. They once were successful, creating and ruling a great empire, with a rich culture. God says they will be successful; it's right there in the Qur'an. God lays on them the duty to dominate the world, but they can't even dominate their own lands any longer. They face a profound crisis of faith, and it can only resolve one of three ways.

First, the status quo can continue. They can continue to fail, sit in their nations, and accept their plight. By clinging to their culture and their religion they may be ideologically pure, but they will have to

continue to live with the shame of being totally unable to compete.

Solution one: they can stagnate.

The second thing they can do is to accept that their culture and their religion are actually the problem. They can recognize that they will have to liberalize their culture in order to begin to achieve. They can embrace the modern world, and embrace western ways at least in part. They can break the hold of Islamic teachings; discard Sharia; liberate their women; start to teach science and engineering in their schools instead of the study of the Qur'an; and secularize their societies.

Solution two: they can reform.

Some Arab nations have begun to do this, and to the extent that they have they have also started to succeed. But this is unacceptable to the majority; it is literally sinful. It is heresy. What good does it do to succeed in the world if, by so doing, you condemn your soul to hell? Which leaves only one other way: become relatively competitive by destroying all other cultures which are more capable. You level the playing field by tearing down all the mountains rather than filling in the valleys; you make yourself the tallest by shooting everyone taller than you are.

Solution three: they can lash out, fight back.

It's vitally important to understand that this is the reason they're fighting back. It's not to gain revenge for some specific action in the past on our part. It isn't an attempt to influence our foreign policy. Their goal is our destruction, because they can't keep hold on what they have and still think of themselves as being successful as long as we exist and continue to outperform them. al Qaeda grew out of this deepening resentment and frustration within the failed Arab culture. It is the first manifestation of solution three, but as long as the deep disease continues in the culture of our enemy, it won't be the last. Its initial demands to the US were a bit surprising, and not very well known. (And obscured by the fact that as their struggle continued recently, they kept changing their stated demands in hopes of attracting allies from elsewhere in the Arab sphere.) The original demand was for a complete cessation of contact between America and Arabia. Not just a pullout of our soldiers from holy Arab soil, but total isolation so that the people of greater Arabia would no longer be exposed in any way to us or our culture or our values. No television, no radio, no music, no magazines and books, no movies. No internet. And that isn't possible; you can't go backward that way. But it's interesting that this shows their real concern. If they're no longer exposed to us, they are no

longer shamed by comparing their failure to our success, and no longer seduced by it and tempted to discard their own culture and adopt ours.

Solution three manifests, and will continue to manifest, in many ways.

Another way it manifests is in a new Arab imperialism, an ambition in some quarters to recreate the Arab empire and by so doing to regain political greatness. Arab nationalism doesn't directly spring from Islam, but it does spring from this deep frustration and resentment caused by the abject failure of the enemy culture, and its most prominent practitioner is Saddam Hussein.

Both al Qaeda's terrorist attacks, and Saddam's attempts to incorporate other Arab nations into Iraq, spring from the same deep cause. But when I say that al Qaeda and Saddam are not the real enemy, it's because they both arise due to a deeper cause which is the true enemy. If we were to stamp out al Qaeda as a viable organization and reduce it to an occasional annoyance, and remove Saddam's WMDs no matter how, by conquest or inspections, someone else somewhere else would spring up and we would again be in peril. We cannot end this war by only treating the symptoms of al Qaeda and Saddam, though they must be dealt with as part of that process.

This war is actually a war between the modern age and traditional Arab culture, and as long as they stagnated and felt resentment quietly, it wasn't our war. It became our war when al Qaeda started bringing it to our nation. With a series of successively more deadly attacks culminating in the attacks in NYC and Washington last year, it became clear that we in the United States could no longer ignore it, and had to start working actively to remove the danger to us. We didn't pick this war, it picked us, but we can't turn away from it. If we ignore it, it will keep happening.

But the danger isn't al Qaeda as such, though that's the short term manifestation of the danger. This war will continue until the traditional crippled Arab culture is shattered. It won't end until they embrace reform or have it forced on them. Until a year ago, we were willing to be patient and let them embrace it slowly. Now we have no choice: we have to force them to reform because we cannot be safe until they do. And by reform I mean culturally and not politically. The reform isn't just abjuration of weapons of mass destruction. It isn't just promising not to attack any longer. What they're going to have to do is to fix all seven of Ralph Peters' problems, and once they've done so, their nations won't be recognizable.

First, they will seem much more western. Second, they'll start to

succeed, for as Peters notes, nations which fix these problems do become competitive. What he's describing isn't symptoms, its deep causes. We're facing a 14th century culture engaged in a 14th century war against us. The problem is that they are armed with 20th century weapons, which may eventually include nuclear weapons. And they embrace a culture which honors dying in a good cause, which means that deterrence can't be relied on if they get nuclear weapons. Why is it that the US is concerned about Iraq getting nukes when we don't seem to be as concerned about Pakistan or India or Israel? Why are we willing to invade Iraq to prevent it from getting nukes, but not Pakistan to seize the ones it developed? It's because those nations don't embrace a warrior culture where suicide in a good cause, even mass death in a good cause, is considered acceptable. (Those kinds of things are present in Pakistan but don't rule there as yet.)

It's certainly not the case that the majority of those in the culture which is our enemy would gladly die. But many of those who make the decisions would be willing to sacrifice millions of their own in exchange for millions of ours, especially the religious zealots. If such people get their hands on nuclear weapons, then our threat of retaliation won't prevent them from using them against us, or threatening to do so. Which is why we can't let it happen. The chance of Israeli or Pakistani or Indian nukes being used against us is acceptably small. If Arabs get them, then eventually one will be used against us. It's impossible to predict who will do it, or when, or where, or what the proximate reason will be, but it's inevitable that it will happen. The only way to prevent it is to keep Arabs from getting nukes, and that is why Iraq is now critically important and why time is running out.

It's wrong to say that this would be "irrational" on their part. It is a reasoned decision based on an entirely different set of axioms, leading to a result totally unacceptable to us. But they're not insane or irrational. Even though they're totally rational, deterrence ultimately can't stop them from using nuclear weapons against us. All major wars started by someone else, that you eventually come to win, start with a phase where you try to consolidate the situation, to stop the enemy's advance. Then you go onto the offensive, take the war to him, and finish it.

Afghanistan and Iraq are the two parts of the consolidation phase of this war. al Qaeda had to be crippled and Saddam has to be destroyed in order to gain us time and adequate safety to go onto the offensive, and to begin the process which will truly end this war: to destroy Wahhabism, to shatter Islamic fundamentalism, to completely break the will of the Arabs and to totally shame them. Because they are a shame/pride culture, that latter may seem paradoxical. But the reality

is that we cannot win this by making them proud, for they are not a stupid people and they actually have nothing to be proud of. We can't make them proud because we can't give them anything to be proud of; they need accomplishments of their own for pride, and their culture prevents that. The only hope here is to make them so ashamed that they finally face and accept the thing they are trying to hide from in choosing to fight back: their culture is a failure, and the only way they can succeed is to discard it and change.

It may sound strange to say, but what we have to do is to take the 14th century culture of our enemies and bring it into the 17th century. Once we've done that, then we can work on bringing them into the 21st century, but that will be much easier. But they've got to accept their own failure, personally and nationally and culturally. That is the essential first step. They've got to accept that the cause of their failure is their own culture, and that we're not. And they've got to accept that the only way to succeed is to change. That will be a difficult fight, and it's going to take decades. Along the way it's going to be necessary to remove many governments which come to power and yet again try to embrace the past and become militant, nationalistic, fundamentalist, or again attempt to try to develop nuclear weapons.

Saddam has to go not merely because of his programs for development of WMDs. He also has to go because he manifests Arab nationalism and imperialism. Even if he actually consents to disarm, he and the Baathist party must be destroyed. The reason that Iraq's nuclear weapon program is critical is that it means we have to do so immediately; it makes it urgent.

But removing their program to develop nuclear weapons doesn't remove the deeper reason to destroy Saddam and the Baathists, for they are part of the deeper pathology which must be excised. After the consolidation phase of this war is complete, with the destruction of the Taliban and occupation and reform of Iraq, then we will go onto the offensive and begin to strike at the deeper core of the problem. Part of that will be to force reform on Saudi Arabia, through a combination of diplomacy, persuasion, subversion, propaganda and possibly even military force.

What this shows is just how deeply I disagree with many who oppose this war. I am forthrightly proposing what some might call cultural genocide. The existing Arab culture which is the source of this war is a total loss. It must be shattered, annihilated, leaving behind no more traces in the Arab lands than the Samurai left in Japan or the mounted knights left in Europe.

I am forthrightly stating that it will be necessary to destabilize the

entire middle east, which puts me exactly counter to European foreign policy. No band-aid will do. It isn't possible to patch things up with diplomacy because the rot runs too deep. Diplomacy now would be treating the symptoms and not the true disease. I am forthrightly stating that no amount of aid to the poor will stop the aggression against us, which will anger liberals everywhere. It isn't our wealth they hate, it's our accomplishments. The only way we can appease them is to ourselves become failures, and that is a price I'm not willing to pay.

And I claim that the US bears essentially no blame for the fundamental source of their anger towards us. They don't hate us because of our foreign policy. They don't ultimately hate us because of past mistakes. They don't hate what we do or what we have done. They hate what we are, and what we show them that they are not. They hate our accomplishments and our capabilities because we force them to see their own lack of accomplishments and their incompetence and impotence. And I'm saying that the US must do this, with help or without, because the US will be the continuing target of Arab solution number 3 as long as this resentment continues to boil, which it will do as long as Arab culture is not shattered and reformed. We will accept help from others if it's truly helpful, but we'll do it alone if we have to. (Or we will try and fail.)

We will be the primary target because we're the most successful. It's as simple as that. And that means that this ultimately will be a unilateral war by us; we're the ones with the most on the line. If the Arabs eventually do get nukes, the first one they use will either be against Israel or against us. It won't be against Europe, and if more conventional terrorist attacks continue, the most damaging ones will be directed against us. We will pay most of the price for this war, in staggering amounts of money, in losses on the field of battle, and in death and destruction at home, and therefore any talk of unified multilateral international action by a coalition of equals is nonsense. The other nations won't risk as much and won't pay as much and won't contribute as much and therefore deserve less say in what will happen.

In the mean time, now that al Qaeda has broken the ice, there will be further terrorist attacks against us as long as this war continues. They may be made by al Qaeda itself, or they may be made by other groups who will spring up. We can't totally prevent that until we've removed the true cause of those attacks: Arab cultural failure. Nothing short of that will stop the attacks. They're part of the setbacks which always accompany any major war. We'll do our best to foil such attacks, but inevitably some will succeed.

And those who don't understand the true issues will inevitably point

to such attacks as proof that our campaign is a failure, that by our aggressiveness we raised further terrorist groups against us, that we should abandon the war and try appeasement, concession, aid, humanistic solutions.

And they'll be wrong, because they don't understand the real reason why we're being attacked and therefore why such approaches won't truly remove the source of the grievance.. They won't stop hating us until they become successful and begin to achieve on their own. We can't make them successful with material gifts, including aid to their poor. We can only make them successful with cultural changes, and they will resist that. Now that we've been attacked, we are ourselves compelled to force them to accept those cultural changes, because that is the only way short of actual genocide to remove the danger to ourselves. This war will end when they change, but not before.