

[*Winning the Un-War: A New Strategy for the War on Terrorism*, Charles Peña, Potomac Books, 240 pages]

## The Art of Un-War

By Ivan Eland

IF PRESIDENT George W. Bush had hired Charles Peña to formulate U.S. policy against terrorism, the country would be much safer and the president would probably not be experiencing popularity akin to that of O.J. Simpson. The invasion and occupation of Iraq, the president's signature policy initiative, has dragged his poll numbers down—probably permanently—into the 30s. Peña's book provides much evidence, however, that the stakes for the country are much higher than this.

The author demonstrates that the Iraq War has impeded neutralization of the main threat to the United States—al-Qaeda—and, in fact, has made this threat worse by fanning the flames of radical Islam and providing a more effective training ground for terrorists than did the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets during the 1980s. Others have made similar arguments, but Peña provides much hard evidence to demonstrate the thesis. Yet the real value of the book is that Peña does what many authors fail to do—take this argument to its logical conclusion.

Many Democratic and liberal critics of the Iraq War fail to realize that the Bush administration's foreign policy is not that different from Bill Clinton's and other Democratic and Republican presidents since World War II. All of those presidents ran a policy of overseas interventionism—of which the Iraq War is only the latest episode. Current Bush critics are many of the same people who supported Clinton's interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the near invasion of Haiti. But Peña astutely realizes that the interventionist U.S. foreign

policy of past presidents helped cause the rise and ideological success of al-Qaeda in the Islamic world.

The author notes that Clausewitz said all energies should be focused on the enemy's "center of gravity," on which everything the adversary does depends. Peña cites Michael Scheuer, the former CIA analyst who was in charge of tracking Osama bin Laden, as saying that al-Qaeda has no center of gravity in the traditional sense—no economy, cities, homeland, power grids, or conventional military—but uses U.S. policies that enrage Muslims as a substitute. Peña relates that the 9/11 Commission and numerous polls in the Islamic world show that radical Islamists do not hate the United States for its freedoms, way of life, culture, accomplishments, or values, but rather for its policies. In fact, bin Laden's writings and statements focus on U.S. policies toward Muslims, and he specifically denies that he attacks the United States because it is free.

The author explores military options (for example, adding more Special Operations forces and unmanned aerial vehicles and not expelling sorely needed specialized linguists for violating the military's "don't ask don't tell" policies toward homosexuals) and improvements in homeland security (for example, government precautions against the threat of handheld anti-aircraft weapons and the protection of critical dams) to fight terrorism, but he argues that reconfigured military forces and domestic security enhancements will provide only limited protection against future terrorist attacks. Peña notes that defending against terrorists is a Maginot Line. Determined terrorists will find a way around any set of defenses. And as the dangerous situation in Baghdad shows, heavy security does not necessarily prevent terrorism.

Unlike other authors, both neoconservative and Wilsonian liberal, Peña is not afraid to say that given the U.S. government's limited ability to deter, prevent, or foil terrorist attacks in the target-rich domestic environment, a more restrained foreign policy is a must

to remove the motivation for radical Islamists to attack America. The implication of Peña's work is that overseas empire does not promote security but instead undermines it.

Very few other analyses on terrorism reach this obvious conclusion. They focus on tactical ways to apprehend or kill terrorists—using intelligence, law enforcement, or military means—or improvements in homeland security designed to guard U.S. infrastructure. They neglect the all-important motivation for terrorist attacks. Even publications that do admit U.S. foreign policy is the root cause of anti-American terrorism avoid recommending a change in that policy. In fact, the White House's 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States* notes the relationship but then says that homeland security seeks to deny terrorists the option to attack U.S. territory, thus providing a "secure foundation for America's ongoing global engagement." As Peña notes, maintaining the U.S. global military presence seems to have become an end in itself. The White House has it exactly backwards. U.S. foreign and national-security policy should protect American citizens, territory, and society, not hold them hostage to preserve the American empire.

In contrast, when focusing on terrorists' motivation, Peña unearths some facts that few authors mention. For all the talk by the Bush administration and the media about state sponsorship of terrorism by Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Peña points out that these states supported terrorist groups that no longer focused their attacks on U.S. targets. In fact, Peña shows that of the 36 foreign terrorist organizations and 38 other terrorist groups designated by the State Department, very few attack U.S. targets.

One of those true threats to the United States—and the only one with global reach that can attack the U.S. homeland—is al-Qaeda. But Peña notes that al-Qaeda only attacks the United States because the United States has taken sides in a civil war within Islam.

Osama bin Laden wants to establish theocratic government in the Islamic world and so must overthrow what he perceives to be corrupt, secular states. The United States props up most of those regimes—in Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc.—either by military assistance or by stationing troops within their territory. Peña observes that in the Islamic tradition, all Muslims are supposed to help expel non-Muslims from Islamic territory. That is why fierce resistance has resulted from the U.S. invasion of Iraq and support of non-Islamic warlords in Somalia.

Somalia is a quintessential example of interventionist U.S. policy backfiring and having the opposite of the effect desired by American policymakers. The United States supported local Somali warlords against weak Islamic guerrillas. The Islamic militia then portrayed the warlords as lackeys of the United States and gained a much larger popular following. The Islamists then took over

terrorist attacks increased from 175 in 2003 to 625 in 2004—not counting terrorist attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq. Rather than being part of the war on terrorism, the Iraq War seems to have bred retaliatory terror.

Peña criticizes President Bush's contrary view that the United States must fight terrorists in Iraq so that Americans don't have to fight them at home. He argues that the rash of major attacks in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Turkey, Spain, and the United Kingdom indicate that Islamist terrorists don't seem to be as bogged down in Iraq as the United States seems to be.

If anything, Peña's analysis may be a little timid in a few small ways. He goes out of his way to say people refuse to look at U.S. policies because they don't want to be accused of blaming America for 9/11. He states that this is understandable because nothing justifies those attacks, but that the reasons for rising Muslim hatred of the United States do

been very unusual in North America. This is a hard place for terrorists to operate because it is usually far away from their bases, making logistics issues challenging. In addition, as Peña does point out, Muslims in America are better integrated into society than those in Europe and so may be less likely to become radicalized and shelter terrorists or perpetrate terrorism. Thus, the absence of a statistically rare event doesn't necessarily mean much.

Finally, Peña correctly notes that before the U.S. government infringes on civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism, it should demonstrate that the new governmental powers are essential, that they would be effective, and that there is no less invasive way to accomplish the security goal. Nevertheless, this standard is too low. Government actions must be constitutional, even if that is inconvenient. Many of the Bush administration's usurpations of civil liberties and expansions of executive powers after 9/11 are of questionable constitutionality. Even if one accepts that "there is a war on" against terrorism (even though this has not been formally declared), the Constitution is not suspended in wartime. In fact, during wartime, Americans need more assurance of their constitutional rights.

But these are small issues in an otherwise excellent counterproposal to the Bush administration's incompetent and disastrous war on terror. Peña convincingly, clearly, and concisely argues that an alternative program—intelligence, law enforcement, and limited military action to dismantle al-Qaeda; improvements in homeland security; and most important, a more restrained U.S. foreign policy to reduce the motivation for future anti-U.S. attacks—could reduce or eliminate the bull's eye that the Bush administration has painted on the backs of the American people. ■

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## THE IRAQ WAR SEEMS TO HAVE BRED RETALIATORY TERROR.

Mogadishu, the capital, and may take over other key territory in Somalia, perhaps creating a future safe haven for terrorists who have a bone to pick with the United States. Of course, this does not mean that every nation with a weak government will become a haven for terrorists. In fact, the episode shows that the United States is so unpopular in the world that doing nothing would have been preferable to charging in and making more people mad. If the United States stays out of such failed states, any terrorist groups spawned there would have no reason to attack us, just as most groups on the State Department terrorism list don't.

Similarly, Peña implies that if the United States withdrew from Iraq, America would experience less anti-American terrorism worldwide. He notes that the Bush administration cancelled the State Department's annual report entitled "The Patterns of Global Terrorism" in 2004 because the number of "significant"

need to be explored. Peña might be better served by more boldly asserting that al-Qaeda—and not the victims or American society—should be blamed for the death and destruction of 9/11, but that the victims' government earned collateral culpability for endangering them with aggressive policies overseas that incited the hatred that motivated the attack. In other words, a greater distinction should be made between American society, which did not motivate the attacks, and the ill-conceived U.S. government policies that contributed significantly to the origin of the terrorism.

Peña dismisses the administration's boast that no major terrorist attack has occurred since 9/11 because of government security measures. He says that perhaps al-Qaeda hasn't chosen to attack. A stronger argument would be that regardless of government measures, catastrophic terrorism is a rare event. Historically, according to the State Department's statistics, terrorism has

# It's Easy Being Green



So here at last is Taki's way to save the planet without pain. But before we begin, a warning: don't try doing it all at once. Melting glaciers,

violent hurricanes, flash floods, terrible droughts, the threat to polar bears in the shrinking Arctic Sea ice, and the real possibility of fires in the Amazon rainforest cannot be reversed overnight. Certainly not by turning off your engine at a traffic light, the way the wise Swiss people do. (Mind you, it helps.) The trick lies in small domestic savings and not listening to neocons. The unmentionables want us to believe that climate change is liberal propaganda, but unlike WMD in Iraq, climate change is real and very scary. Although Miami and Palm Beach are places I wouldn't visit even if I were sober, none of us would like to see them capsize under rising water. So here we go.

Lesson number one: we must keep the carbon dioxide emissions at present levels, which means dressing for the weather and turning down the heat five degrees, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by half a ton a year. It's simple common sense. Why lie around watching TV—which kills your brain and expands your waistline—wearing a bathing suit? Put on a sweater and presto, you have saved half a ton.

Lesson number two: turn off the television when you're not watching. By this I mean get off your seat and push the button. Don't click it off, turn it off. It is as simple as that.

Number three: use a gas oven.

Number four: buy local. Purchasing local vegetables saves miles of transport, and transporting goods produces emissions. Elementary, as a certain famous English detective used to say.

Lesson number five: change the way you drive. Never go above 60 miles per hour. It will not only save your life, it will

also help save the planet. Driving at 60 mph or below reduces emissions by 30 percent. Even better, drive a diesel. And while you're at it, force Detroit to become responsible. Gas addiction is an American macho disease. Hummers are for those who are penis-challenged. Hollywood types. As Thomas Friedman wrote, "The more Hummers we have on the road in America, the more military Hummers we will need in the Middle East." Hummers average 9 miles per gallon. This is why Toyota is worth \$199 billion and GM \$15 billion.

Lesson number six: force those bums in Washington to find carbon-free choices of power. Back nuclear power, however controversial it may sound or feel. It will cut down emissions by two thirds.

MASS PRODUCTION OF JUNK IS A **BIGGER THREAT THAN AL-QAEDA** AND TWICE AS DESTRUCTIVE.

Number seven: use solar and wind power. A rig off Norway traps carbon dioxide, turns it into liquid, and buries it in vast empty spaces beneath the earth's crust. Wind and solar power may be expensive, but not as expensive as the blood money we pay those camel drivers in Saudi Arabia who pass themselves off as princes while cornering the market in high-class hookers, mega yachts, private planes, and Las Vegas casino gambling.

Lesson number eight: think big, like the aforementioned Norway rig. Technology can work for us and can save our children's children.

Number nine: wake up and do your part. Every little bit helps, like encouraging tree planting. Next time a fast-talking real-estate developer comes near, plant one on his kisser and then plant a tree or anything green.

Lesson number ten: don't waste. Turn off a light in an empty room. I remember the first thing I noticed when I came to America was that no one—except my mother, that is—ever turned off a light. Insulate. Is there anything easier than insulation? It's cheaper, healthier, and helps save you know what.

In the past, we had an excuse. We did not know what we were doing to our planet. Now we do. We can easily reform this by following these simple steps. They are painless and do not change our way of life.

I drive in Switzerland, where drivers are heavily fined for excessive speed and for failing to turn their idling

engines off. Some foreigners complain. Too bad. Tiny Switzerland is doing her part. Do yours and you will one day be able to tell your grandchildren that you played a part in not dooming them. The purpose of human life is not only to make money and to have a bigger car than the next person. Mass production of junk is a bigger threat than al-Qaeda and twice as destructive. Think small, take your business to local, family-run businesses, try not to pollute. And don't forget to plant a right cross on real-estate sharks, neocons, and any corporate type who tries to tell you this is a left-wing conspiracy. ■