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## Beyond Terror: Strategy in a Changing World

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insurance measures that would pass the cost to users and producers vice the population as a whole. Such measures would have to, as noted, provide incentives (reduced insurance rates) to improve security. Organizationally, the United States could either attempt the “lead agency” approach (a single entity with responsibility for security of the homeland) or the “interagency” approach, an entity that coordinates the many agencies responsible for various segments of the security problem. The authors believe that the Bush administration is on the right track with the interagency method.

*Homeland Security* is an excellent introduction to strategic approaches to the threats that face this nation. It provides a backdrop for further research into homeland defense. *Protecting the American Homeland* is a logical, flowing, step-by-step analysis to defining policy issues involving the development of a comprehensive protection plan. Both books are useful and thoughtful analyses of homeland security issues.

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Peters, Ralph. *Beyond Terror: Strategy in a Changing World*. Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole, 2002. 353pp. \$22.95

In *Beyond Terror*, author, historian, and pragmatist Ralph Peters has assembled a collection of his own essays that puts the “post-9/11” world in perspective in terms of the U.S. reaction to the attacks and the historical context in which those attacks occurred.

A retired Army lieutenant colonel and former intelligence officer, Peters has

been engaged in every major U.S. theater, focusing the better part of his professional life on assessing the threats to U.S. national security. *Beyond Terror* offers a clear, unfettered, down-to-earth perspective of the world, as it is, not as the media “spinmeisters” or the “intellectual elite” would have one believe. His is a refreshing and invigorating view of what has made America the singular global force that it is today and what will allow it to maintain that stature in the long-term. He unabashedly believes that this country’s effort to protect its borders and global interests is a righteous one, and he offers some insightful and common sense prescriptions for how the United States should proceed. Peters tempers the enthusiasm for quick fixes to terrorist threats and endeavors to steel the American public for a long, protracted effort that will require every facet of American power and will: “Like crime, terrorism will never be completely eliminated.” What is needed, Peters argues, if the effect of terrorism on the American way of life is to be reduced, is not hand-wringing but an understanding of the terrorists’ intentions and motives, and of their ever more complex tools and planning processes.

The collection of essays presented in this work is arranged in two “theme sets.” In the first, Peters establishes the American reality in a hostile world from a historical perspective. In essence, the United States presently finds itself dealing with the colossal failures of the European colonial era, particularly with respect to the Islamic world, in which Western social, political, and economic ideals failed to take root and now take the terrorists’ blame for the failure and decay of their societies at large. In the context of these failing

cultures, Peters categorizes the emergence of two types of terrorists: the practical terrorist (or freedom fighter) whose actions reflect the yearning for social and political change, and the apocalyptic terrorist, who is “possessed and governed by a devilish vision . . . whose true goal is simply the punishment of others, in the largest possible numbers . . . as an offering to the bloodthirsty and vengeful God that they have created for themselves.” Unlike for the practical terrorist, “No change in the world order will ever content the apocalyptic terrorist, since his actual discontents are internal to himself.” Describing the latter as an unalterable menace to whom destruction and violence are not means to an end but ends in themselves, Peters suggests timely precepts (twenty-five to be exact) for the application of American power in the war on terror. The one that stands out as the key to long-term success is, “Do not be afraid to be powerful.” The rest flow logically from it and provide a viable framework in which U.S. national security policy should be executed in the “new world paradigm.” To strengthen the American sense of purpose, and more interestingly, provide an insight into the real character of American power, Peters describes the unique aspects of American social and cultural norms that will allow it to continue to be the preemptive global power: the ability of our society to break from “historical norms,” to adapt and be responsive to changing dynamics, and the ability to compromise and yet assume a sense of responsibility for who and what we are.

The second series of essays deals primarily with recommendations for a “blueprint” for future warfare in the campaign against

terror. It debunks social myths closely held by past U.S. presidential administrations. Peters attacks the present line of force planning by pointing out that the United States is well suited to fight the old Soviet threat, which never materialized: “We have the most powerful military in history, but its power is designed to defeat conventional threats. When the enemy does not ‘fight fair’ and deploy tanks, ships, and aircraft, we find ourselves punching thin air. We have prepared to fight machines. But the enemy is belief.” He then exquisitely describes the warfare challenge of the future with respect to the “human terrain of urban operations” in the context of three city “types”: hierarchical (synonymous to a typical U.S. city); multi-cultural (in contrast to “the fantasies of Liberal Arts Faculties,” in these cities “contending systems of custom and belief [are] often aggravated by ethnic divisions struggling for dominance”—these “cockpits of struggle” are representative of future combat challenges for U.S. ground forces); and tribal (the most “difficult urban environment for peacekeeping operations; ethnic conflicts in this environment can be the most intractable and merciless.”)

Against this backdrop, Peters argues the shallowness in the use of U.S. military power in the past administration and then emphatically debunks the “casualty myth” that wove its way into the political thought and leadership of the last administration. He is outraged that an “elitist” administration could have so underestimated the will of the American people to commit blood and treasure in worthy causes that its attempts to steer into harm’s way merely put the ship of state hopelessly “in irons.” The subsequent “low risk” approaches

(casualty avoidance via air “delivery” of military power) taken to “punish” violators of human rights and international law, Peters declares, merely emboldened lawless rogues to perpetrate more aggressive acts of human carnage and suffering.

*Beyond Terror* is a must-read for those who desire to get at the heart of the issues at hand without being hamstrung by political biases or organizational loyalties. The opinions of Peters will serve as a superb starting point for more detailed discussions on U.S. national security strategy and the direction that the war on terror should take in the future.

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Buckley, Roger. *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002. 258pp. \$23

Even as the world remains focused on the war on terror, Roger Buckley’s examination of U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific since 1945 reminds us of the danger of ignoring Asia. Although this area has been crisscrossed in the post–Cold War period by such formal and informal regional organizations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Buckley cautions that “any future Asia without America is widely seen to be a recipe for possible chaos,” since “Washington alone possesses the political and military strengths to deter aggression and thereby provide the essential foundations

for nation-building, economic advancement and regional building.”

This book recounts the wars and America’s postwar difficulties after World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War. Washington’s challenges are far from over, and Buckley’s list of contemporary difficulties includes “two Koreas, two Chinas, nuclear and conventional weaponry on a massive scale and the absence of a Russo-Japanese peace treaty.” He argues the United States must prepare to resolve such problems through cooperative partnerships that will rely less on bilateral and vertical relations and more on a variety of Asian nations accepting a greater share of the responsibility; simultaneously, the United States must retain a combination of “regional muscle,” the “political will to readily deploy” forces, and the “necessary weapon systems and Pacific Rim basing facilities” to act effectively as “insurance against aggression” and “reassurance to its allies.”

According to Buckley, by far the most dangerous Asian problem is the potential threat posed by the People’s Republic of China. Whether intentionally or not, this book’s focus on wars and their aftermaths suggests that a conflict between China and America is in the offing. In particular, Beijing sees Washington as wielding arbitrary and excessive force in a way that undermines a more equitable distribution of power. Although some have predicted the evolution of a cooperative Sino-U.S.-Japanese triad, China’s chagrin at the extent of U.S. power, and its anti-hegemonic stance, will make it even more likely that the region will see a “distancing of Beijing from an already long-established U.S.-Japan partnership.” Assuming this happens, “the