

# TOWARD PROACTIVE PEACE: A Science of Terrorism Prevention

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The September 11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing war on terrorism have been teaching us a lesson which the military has long acknowledged. That lesson is that peace must be proactive. During peace, society needs to do those cultural things which would prevent war.

Cultural or social efforts preventing war include two points. One is to have a strong defense structure. Such military strength has global and local limits, but even Osama bin Laden knows and Saddam Hussein and al-Zawaqiri knew what our military could do. This is the reason bin Laden is still in hiding. The second is to be culturally involved, helping encourage people here and abroad to do good, and nonviolently correcting their misdeeds, where possible.

I shall examine four views of peace and war. These include naïve peace and hot war, peace as cold war, transitional peace and transitional war, and proactive peace. Taking the holistic historical perspective, I see an evolution. The world seems to be evolving from the first theme and toward the fourth one. Our current war on terrorism, including the conflict in Iraq, appear to be the third situation of peace and war, changing toward the fourth view.

## Naïve Peace and Hot War

Naïve peace and hot war appear to comprise human history. One nation deploys uniformed soldiers to attack

another country. The attacked country may be able to militarily respond. This ongoing process or peace-war cycle has included nonmilitary activities.

Spies, recruitment of civilian sympathizers from the “enemy” side, cutting off supply lines to the “enemy” military, and using various forms of psychological warfare comprise nonviolent or nonmilitary endeavors. No war throughout history has been completely a sudden, violent, military affair.

Naïve peace means that nations have taken pre-war situations for granted. The attacked nations have generally ignored situations in the countries which have attacked them. Enemy leaders, rulers to call for war against another nation, do not suddenly drop from the sky. They grow up learning and deciding that one day they must hit another nation. Their intentions and actions would not have been possible had the attacked countries been proactive instead of naïve. Had spies and overt social relations been in place in foreign countries, an enemy might not have evolved.

A peace which ignores potential enemies leads to hot war. One nation attacks another. The defending country seeks to militarily respond. Such response involves soldiers from the attacked nation to kill the uniformed military of the attackers. Once the killing and destroying are over, the defending nation feels the enemy is eliminated, and it returns to another naïve peace. This means the peace-war cycle is simply awaiting the next war.

What we see in naïve peace and hot war is akin to ignoring daily maintenance, and then responding or reacting to a crisis. But society tells us to do the opposite in many instances. We hear of preventive medicine, crime prevention, fire prevention, preventive maintenance. One day, hopefully the 9/11 attacks and the war in Iraq can help us see the need for terrorism prevention.

## Peace as Cold War

The peace-war cycle (naïve peace and hot war) has been with us through World Wars I and II, and Korea. With conventional weapons, societies have had little difficulty imagining attacking, responding, and hopefully defeating the enemy. Killing the enemy has been seen as possible and necessary as a means of preserving the defending nation’s existence and future. Every invention including guns, dynamite, machine guns, aviation, radar, ships, and so on, changed the face of war.

Taking life and destroying property had historically been relatively easier. Technology helped the attacker become more powerful, and the defender more hopeful in surviving. Ironically, Just War Theory showed us that even conventional war would be unethical and required justification. Technology, it turned out, was socially and morally limited even before sophisticated weapons emerged. Nuclear weapons reinforced and extended that view.

The cold war redefined war and peace. Peace may or may not have been naïve (we



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were seeking out Communists as we were not seeking out al Qaeda), but did become a tense situation, a cold war. Technology meant no longer simply another new weapon, but a quantum leap toward the unthinkable. Any attack would mean Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) instead of the destruction only of the enemy. The atomic and then hydrogen bombs meant something ominous. The attacking nation would fly bombers with nuclear weapons against another country which possessed the same planes and bombs. A response entailed a nuclear one where both nations could destroy each other, and bring about global disaster.

Technology taught us a lesson. War with conventional weapons required justification; a conflict involving nuclear, and then biological and chemical weapons could end civilization. No longer could a war be justified.

We have evolved from conventional war requiring justification, to the possibility of nuclear warfare where humanity could become extinct. Terrorism is now teaching us the ultimate lesson. Terrorists are forcing us to rethink peace, and thereby war. We have left the cold war, and entered a transitional peace involving transitional war.

### **Transitional Peace and Transitional War**

September 11 was unique in history. A supposedly invulnerable nation was attacked. The target included not only the military (Pentagon), but also civilians (World Trade Center), but no visible military forces were attacked. The attackers were civilians, using box cutters to hijack civilian aircraft. What we experienced was an attack on our soil by civilian sympathizers and fighters.

The military, however powerful, could do only so much in Southeast Asia, before political and social forces restrained us. Vietnam was a transitional war, forcing us to see the cultural foundations of proactive peace. But Vietnam occurred “over there.” The war on terrorism started “here.” Actually, it evolved “over there,” in the Middle East as we slept for nearly six decades “over here” and “over there” since after World War II.

A transitional war is complex. The military takes on a social role with civilians and uniformed personnel. Civilians not associated with the military need to relate to foreign cultures. This type of war is showing us that conflict does not just occur. A dysfunctional culture enables people to learn to hate, and attack.

The attacked nation needs to respond with both military and civilian forces. Military forces attempt to take down enemy leaders (who train but will never themselves fight), and suicide bombers and other terrorists. In doing so, the uniformed soldiers learn they are dealing with social causes of conflict. Some in the military will need to enter combat, but doing so from a justified context. Others will need to socially and culturally help in reorienting potential and actual terrorists. Still others, outside the military, perhaps outside the government, have to engage in helping foreign people develop their country so that future terrorists do not emerge.

Transitional war does not aim to merely kill. Even hot war and conventional conflict could not do that: it was unethical and unjustified. The aim of transitional war is not merely to kill the enemy in a just war, but to help a transition from war to peace. This means a transition in foreign countries from

dysfunctional (terrorist breeding) to functional (not terrorist breeding) environments. This type of war means transitional peace.

Currently, the Army is pointing the way toward change. West Point is preparing its cadets for a changing world where they will be linguistically aware and be leaders in political situations. Special Forces Soldiers take positions in town leadership roles. The Army continues to train its uniformed members to be world ambassadors, through cultural awareness. The Army’s Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) are doing an important job of rebuilding Iraq and other countries.

A transitional peace means that at home we can no longer take things for granted. Reject naïve peace. This leads to conventional hot war, can bring about a cold war, and will result also in terrorism. A transitional peace is coupled with a war that is putting us in transition toward proactive peace. Transitional war forces us at home to rethink our vulnerability, global social duties, and humanity. It is a transition toward proactive peace.

### **Proactive Peace**

Peace is naïve, transitional, or proactive. Naïve peace leads to conventional war, peace as cold war, and terrorism. Transitional peace and war are efforts away from naïve peace and cold war, and toward a proactive peace. Proactive peace means that we are monitoring potential and active terrorists here and elsewhere. This cannot involve a dismantling of our military. Potential terrorist leaders need to know that should our social and cultural programs fail, their lives and futures are not rosy. They will always be on the run, in hiding, or be killed.

In monitoring potential and active terrorists, proactive peace encourages the innocent to continue doing good, and corrects misdeeds of the potentially violent. To many, proactive peace may be an ideal which we cannot attain in the real world. Civilians do most of the work; no violence exists requiring military activity. This does not mean we no longer need a military. A strong military is our safety net.

Additionally, a military means increasing emphasis on an integration of special operations and conventional strength. At the risk of offending many in the military, I argue for a change in terminology. What we term “special operations” ought be called “general operations” because Green Berets and others in special ops fight and train in diverse environments, relate to foreign citizens, and are generalists instead of specializing in land (traditional Army), sea (Navy), air (Air Force), or have an otherwise branch identity (Marines.). Special operations can mean the five branches just named.

### **Terrorism Prevention**

I argue for an interdisciplinary science or discipline of terrorism prevention. This compares well with preventive medicine. In medicine, we can first ignore our health and diet (naïve peace) and then require surgery (hot war). Second, we can ignore our health, knowing that our system cannot endure surgery. Going under the knife for a problem we create would kill us (MAD). Third, a transitional health means that we ignore good diet, and an illness arises requiring serious, long term treatment (transitional peace and war). Hopefully, after years of neglect, we can one day

have good health after ongoing treatment and diet.

When does “treatment” stop? In real world terms, when we do withdraw troops from other countries? Technically, this cannot even happen in proactive peace. In transitional peace, the later, if at all, the better; the sooner, the worst. Indeed, why withdraw troops when we can build bases and house our military in case we need them for countering violence? Beyond violence, and in order to prevent future war, a base would be ideal for housing a permanent military doing civil affairs work.

During both transitional peace and war, and proactive peace, the military is a must. During a transitional period, the military is visibly taking lives. In proactive peace, the military exists in strength in the event that we fail in various instances to stop a terrorist emerging and attacking. Sam C. Sarkesian (U.S. Army, retired) and Robert E. Connor, Jr. (U.S. Army retired), point out in their outstanding book, *The U.S. Military Profession into the Twenty-First Century*, that tomorrow’s military needs to be a priority, and integrate conventional and nonconventional forces. They said both combat and noncombat missions or goals are emerging realities in the “conflict spectrum.”

In an article in the November-December 2005 issue of *Infantry Magazine*, Colonel (Retired) Robert B. Nett speaks about our military as “Ambassadors to the World.” A transitional war requires that troops do more than participate in violence. They are in foreign lands to help other cultures survive, and turn potential terrorists and insurgents toward our side. These troops are giving metaphorical medicine to help heal foreign cultural wounds.

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