

When I Was Saddam

I was responsible for producing the enemy for the two first Army After Next Wargames in 1997. I played in the '97 and '98 games as a trainer and adviser to the enemy – the Red Team. In '99 I commanded the Red against a retired 3-star commanding the U.S. Blue Team. I shaped the strategy, operational concepts, tactics, techniques, procedures, force structure and design for a fictional rogue Islamic regional power. I was Saddam Hussein in the future beyond 2015.

I had some different military capabilities from today's Saddam. Yet, today's Saddam has used his military in many of the ways we proposed a thinking enemy would. Asymmetric responses are rational, professional military analysis. Negate the enemy's strengths, attack his weaknesses, figure out his center of gravity and derive the defeat mechanisms to bring him to his culminating point.

When I was Saddam, I welcomed a U.S. reliance on firepower. The more long range the better. Fires alone are an engineering and math problem. The Serbs understand perfectly. Their military survived the Kosovo air war intact. Lesson one: Don't put your equipment out in the open and don't let them stand still and transmit. Fortunately, the Iraqi's lack the discipline to avoid stupid attacks.

When I was Saddam, I didn't worry about maneuvering forces unless they were willing to close with and destroy me in urban areas. Even though urban terrain is the best defensive military terrain, I had to care about what was coming at me. Look at how the Chechens won battles and the Somalis lost. Lesson two: Only well-trained, well-led infantry supported by combined arms with a will to fight can win in urban combat. The Iraqi's can make urban combat costly, but they lack the leadership, training and will to win.

When I was Saddam, I planned to go completely to ground – actually underground – if superior forces overrun. The French saw this when they destroyed their Islamic enemy in Algeria – and lost the war at home. Lesson three: You must have an idea that unites your political, moral struggle past the first defeats. The Iraqi's Baathist dictatorship's authority is terror alone. If they could articulate an Islamic homeland defense, they might have something.

Saddam isn't employing all our Red Team tactics – thank goodness. But, at least three major considerations from the future wargames illustrate concerns for today. These concerns effect how soon we win. They set the stage for the long, hard peace to follow.

- 1 The Enemy Will. War is a contest of wills, not the math of target servicing, sorties, and body count. War is against the thinking enemy commanders and their soldiers. If the enemy has the will to fight, anything is possible. Our American Revolution was won against awful odds. Likewise, will lengthened the War for Southern Independence (1861-1865) for years. The Iraqi's who have the will to fight number in the 10s of thousands – not in the hundreds of thousands or millions. They'll be defeated at cost.
- 2 Our Will. How many U.S. casualties can we take? How many civilian casualties can we take? Our center of gravity is our public support at home. President Bush will provide the leadership to keep our will from going wobbly.
- 3 More Army Needed. At least one Army heavy division could've been present from the start if a Marine Expeditionary Brigade instead of a Marine Expeditionary Force was brought inland. One Marine squad died because

Amphibious vehicles can't take a rocket-propelled grenade and aren't meant to be used as a mechanized force. Marine truck-borne infantry and wheeled artillery have problems going cross-country. Marines don't have the combat service support structure to fight far inland, so they hire Kuwaiti trucks which break down. Marines fight well, but they're designed to take the ports and beaches (dear Semper Fi guys spare me your instruction – I'm a graduate of the USMC Command and Staff College). An Army mechanized/armor division would move faster and save American lives fighting to Baghdad.

The sooner you get more Army there, the sooner the war ends. If you know anything about service politics, you know why a MEF is there instead of a MEB. I know how Secretary Rumsfeld hates retired guys who haven't read the war plan second guessing anything. Got it. I understand the wargaming for the future of Land Warfare and it's amazing relationship to events playing out earlier than ever expected.

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