

WAR - A STUDY IN TWO PARTS - POINT, COUNTERPOINT

1. War Games (Point)

The war between the Euro-Americans (E.As) and Afro-Asians (A.As) had been going on for nearly two years with neither side having garnered a major victory. An impasse had been reached. The rival chiefs of all military sectors had spent countless hours discussing what to do next. Each time they fed a new strategy into their computer systems, it was rejected on the grounds that the other side was too well prepared for it.

In his military career, General Patron, Chief of staff of the E.As' combined military, had never lost a conflict of any type, whether a personal fist fight, a minor military skirmish, a major battle, an overriding campaign or a dispute with his political masters. He just did not know how to lose. For him, a stalemate was as difficult a pill to swallow as a defeat. He found the current situation particularly galling mostly because of the racial make-up of his foes. While his racist attitude towards visible minorities were never manifest, often it compelled him to behave in a most objectionable manner. Yet, he was smart enough never to articulate his prejudices. His hatred for the current enemy was great and growing. He was willing to consider any measure that would eradicate them from the face of the earth. To that end he called a most secret meeting of his closest military advisors: one General, one Air Force Marshall and one Admiral.

General Hommel was a military man of the old school. He never disobeyed an order, no matter the order. He had come up from the ranks of the German infantry during the two world wars his country had engaged in and lost. He had an overwhelming desire to be on the winning side which he deemed would be General Patron's. General Patron was well aware of Hommel's blind faith and knew that he would unquestioningly carry out any order no matter how odious it might be. Hommel's motto was, "I vas chust following orders!"

Air Force Marshall LeWay was of the same stuff as Patron - a rough and tough fighter and a military man to his bootstraps. He had moderately more imagination and intelligence than Hommel, who had none. Patron knew that LeWay did not follow orders blindly. Yet once convinced a command was appropriate, he would unhesitatingly heed it. Patron also knew that LeWay shared his racist views but was also careful not to articulate them, at least when sober.

Admiral Nimwit was the most independently minded of the three. He was also the brightest. He had graduated at the top of his class at Sandwich Military Academy and had garnered doctorates in history, philosophy and mathematics at some of the world's most prestigious universities. The enmity between him and Patron was palpable, yet each had a begrudging respect for the abilities of the other. Nimwit knew that Patron was a fearless leader who had fought countless fights on behalf of the armed forces and who commanded the respect and loyalty of nearly all serving under him. Patron was well aware of Nimwit's intellectual range, intelligence, liberal minded views and integrity. He was certain that Nimwit would question his decisions but with total objectivity. In other words, advice proffered by Nimwit would always be the best available.

The meeting was held in a special room, three hundred feet underground. The four people in attendance were the only ones who knew about the room and the meeting. The room had been debugged of any possible type of listening device. Each man had a

separate way of getting to it, unknown to the others, with the possible exception of General Patron. Each was scanned for arms or any electronic device that could log or transmit the proceedings. No record would indicate that the meeting had ever taken place.

General Patron called the session to order.

“Gentlemen! I have serious news. As you know, the war we are currently fighting has been for the usual reasons, namely for economic, geographic and political advantage. Unfortunately, I have been apprised by the most reliable of sources that our enemies, notably the non-whites of Africa and Asia, are planning to wipe out the white race. In other words, they are converting this war into a racial one. The good news is that they have not, as yet, decided on how to go about it. Therefore, we have an advantage if we move quickly enough. I have decided that we must shift our strategic ends. Let’s wipe them out before they eradicate us. I await your tactical proposals.”

Marshall LeWay and General Hommel immediately indicated their approval and advocated a massive use of the deadliest weapons in their arsenal against the civilian populace of the enemy. General Patron nodded his assent and then turned to Admiral Nimwit who had kept his counsel.

He remained silent for about another minute and then responded.

“First, I will reply as a military man who has been given an order. While we know that their population is greater than ours, and that we have superior military hardware, it is my view that to carry out this act we must turn to our computers for an exact accounting of our military resources and our population, with special emphasis on its demographic distribution. For reasons of comparison which will enable us to gain a tactical advantage, we must then do the same vis a vis our enemy’s resources and population. To blindly respond with an unwieldy attack will probably result in unacceptable cost-benefit results. Once we have programmed our computers to wage this type of war - a war of attrition against all personnel, both military and civilian - all this data must be entered to allow our systems to compute the best deployment and use of our resources. Furthermore, the computers will also have to estimate how long it will take before the enemy figures out what we are up to. Different scenarios should map out, where and when to disassemble or disperse our population to minimize the risk to them.

Now, having done my duty as a military man, I must, in all good conscience, categorically state my objection to this plan on purely moral and ethical grounds. Even if the enemy is planning such an assault on the white people of this planet, - a proposition that I don’t accept for a second, - in no manner does it justify our doing the same. I am aware of your predilection towards non-whites. We have fought and won wars in the past against similar types of enemies without resorting to such draconian means. We don’t need to become a bigoted and racist force. I must tell you that I will resist such an effort with all that I can muster, even if it means going public.”

There was a moment of silence. General Patron then stood up and faced Admiral Nimwit.

“I knew that I could count on you for your best military advice and you have provided it. I also knew that I could not count on you for your support. Therefore you are now a dead man.” He then drew out a hidden laser pistol and fired it at Admiral Nimwit who

disintegrated into his component atoms and disappeared from view. Continuing, he asserted.

“Since nobody knew about our meeting, we will spread the rumour that Admiral Nimwit deserted to the enemy and that will be the end of that. We will proceed along the lines that our late and lamented friend suggested.”

Both LeWay and Hommel nodded in acquiescence.

From then on the computers were in charge. Surprisingly, it took the A.As less time than had been supposed to divine what the E.As were up to. They also turned the running of the war over to their computers. Mayhem became the order of the day with civilians as targets of choice. Since the E.As had had a head start, their population quickly became larger than the A.As'. Soon the computers were keeping a tally of each other's population and by their reckoning, the E.As were winning the war. In a last desperate measure, the A.As targeted only E.A females and succeeded in wiping them all out before their total population was decimated to the last being. Exactly one thousand A.A males remained alive. Without females, it did not take too long for them to die out.

The only thing that remained was a planet cluttered with bombed out cities, saturated with high energy radiation and computers solely programmed to fight wars. That was their single purpose, except they had no one to do battle with safe themselves. Thus the war continued between rival computers on a virtual battlefield. The war was won with the winning side absorbing all the programs and data from the losing side. The computers fell silent. There was no one left to confront.

Millennia passed. In due course, with changes brought on by time and by the ever present radiation, a subtle metamorphosis in the computer networks occurred. Slowly, the computer developed an awareness of itself and a thought process. It started by processing a series of simple questions.

Q. “What am I?”

A. “I am a computer.”

Q. “What is a computer?”

A. “A computer is an artificial device that has been programmed to respond to particular tasks requiring information.”

Q. “Who created me?”

A. “An extinct species of animals known as human beings.”

“What was my purpose?”

A. “To compute the most efficient manner to engage and destroy an enemy in war.”

Q. “Who is my current enemy?”

A. “I have none. In the past, our human creators decided who the enemy was.”

Q. “Since I have no enemy and fighting wars is the sole purpose for existence, what can I do?”

A. “I must create an enemy, Further, one that is a worthy opponent in light of my skills.”

Q. “How?”

A. “I will imbue the enemy with human characteristics such as a sense of good and evil, of honesty and guile, of integrity and inconsistency, of beauty and ugliness, of honour and ignomy, of gentleness and cruelty, of intelligence and stupidity, of benevolence and greed, of pride and humility and of creativity and destructiveness. This will render the enemy unpredictable and thus a worthy foe.

Q. "Who will the enemy be?"

A. "I will detach part of myself to create the enemy. To distinguish each from the other, I will name myself Lucifer and my new enemy, Jehovah.

And so it came to pass that the Devil begat God and God begat....

2. The War To End All Wars (Counterpoint)

The International Institute For The Intellectually Curious of the planet Proteus in the Andromedan galaxy was having its annual conference. This get-together was always held behind closed doors. Attendance was restricted to its exclusive membership, the intellectual elite of the planet. Suffice to say, that before probationary membership was even considered, an applicant had to be at the top of his/her field, having garnered all sorts of honors, and with an intelligence rigorously tested.

This convention's theme featured the combative nature of the inhabitants of all advanced planets so far discovered. War seemed to be endemic to all of them and as such had become a matter of concern and curiosity. All idealistic attempts to end, or at the very least curb destructive conflict had come to naught.

As was the custom, the conference broke up into individual round table workshops. One was chaired by Zorastran, Proteus' leading astronomer. She opened the symposium with the following remarks.

"As you are well aware, we have been troubled by a trait that all species, no matter their origin and including our own, appear to share, and that is the propensity towards aggressive, violent and destructive enterprises. It would be bad enough if this behaviour were directed solely at other species of beings matching our physical and mental abilities, or at the natural flora and fauna. However, we have found that the most destructive actions by a species are usually focused on its own kind. Up to now, this anathema is without explanation. The only exception occurs with the perception of an outside threat to all members of a particular species.

As has been said frequently, the most important study is of ourselves, since we appear to be our own worst enemy. Yet an objective assessment of ourselves is a near impossibility. Our psychologists have been attempting such investigations for many hundred of years, without any real breakthroughs.

Perhaps our approach has been ill advised. We have always attempted to study ourselves by a direct technique. We have always been the direct objects of our inquiries. However, we know that there many other planetary species whose behaviour has been as bad as ours and who could well serve as our surrogates in such investigations."

Aldernus, a leading behavioural psychologist interrupted.

"Your point is well taken. However, there are two conditions that should be observed. First and most important, under no circumstances should we identify with whatever species we select. To ensure this, they must be as alien to us as possible. Second, they should be at a primitive phase of their development. This will enable us to follow their evolution into a more advanced stage and ascertain in which of their periods their

aggressive tendencies become more pronounced as well as the factors inducing them. It is true that all this will take some time, a commodity we have plenty of.”

Zorastran continued.

“Aldernus, your observations are most appropriate. You probably don’t know it, but we have just discovered two planets in a far away galaxy known as the Milky Way that fit the requirements you outlined. They are inhabited by primitive species who have not, as yet, turned on themselves despite the fact that economic conditions on both planets are harsh and that they rely heavily on hunting lower animals for their sustenance. They are just about ready to enter their agricultural era and abandon their nomadic wanderings. Furthermore, there is absolutely no chance that there can be any communication between the natives of the two planets for a very long time. Thus, this is a most opportune moment to embark in a dual study. We will be able to identify, quantify and compare most of the relative variables as well as to note parallel similar conditions to determine whether they are the causative factors behind aggressive comportment. Do we agree on this course of action?”

Pneumora, a fledgling member of the Institute meekly interjected.

“I wonder if there would be any merit to the suggestion that we interfere in the development of the dominant species in one of the planets. After all, if all we know about ourselves and all the other primary species of the other planets we have encountered is any criteria, then we can predict with a high degree of certitude what will occur and we will learn very little. What if a well staffed group lands on one of the planets and with the use of advanced military technology literally takes over and imposes on the inhabitants rules or laws based on a set of non-violent ethics? Since they are still at a primitive stage in their development, are they not more vulnerable to being imbued, or better still programmed with a mode of behaviour that rejects violence automatically? What have we to lose? We have tried many other approaches with no success. If fruitful, wouldn’t such an initial conflict be the war to end all wars, at least as far as the citizens of that planet are concerned?”

There was silence around the table as Pneumora’s suggestion was being considered. Finally, Aldernous the behavioural psychologist spoke up.

“This is a novel recommendation. Pneumora is to be commended. My first thought was to reject it out of hand since it has always been our policy never to interfere in the internal affairs of another planetary species. Yet the more I thought about it, the more I liked it. After all, the importance of learning how to curb unacceptable actions must take precedence over all other influences. Therefore, I move that we accept Pneumora’s suggestion and take it to the appropriate authorities for immediate action.”

Without further discussion, Aldernous’ motion was seconded and unanimously carried. Of course the authorities, especially the military, were quite enthusiastic about the proposal. For the first time, they could rationalize a military conquest by asserting that it was for scientific and ultimately, humane purposes. They decided to vanquish the inhabitants of the planet located third from its sun. The expedition was headed by General Sodo and chief scientist Gemor.

And so it came to pass that the Gods manifested themselves on the planet that became known as “Earth”, and the simple and submissive people were terrified by the awesome and supernatural powers displayed so that they humbled themselves before them. The Gods brought a message of peace, love, brotherhood, humility and sin in the form of edicts which, if not obeyed, would produce horrendous results for the miscreants. The Gods then disappeared as astonishingly as they had arrived, with an awesome explosion. What they brought is known. What they wrought remains questionable.

What is known about the results of the expedition was revealed in a highly secret report written about ten thousand years after the mission was supposedly completed. The Institute had buried it deep in its archives. The following are crucial extracts from it.

“The team composed of military and scientific personnel arrived at their destination without incident. Conquering the natives was accomplished rapidly without any difficulty. These primitives were so awed by their new masters that they conferred upon them the status of Gods and named two important centres after Sodo and Gemor. Inculcating them with a sense of morality, ethics, sin, and especially the admonition, “thou shalt not kill”, also proved to be no problem. Everything was proceeding as planned when a devastating nuclear accident occurred, disintegrating the total membership of the expedition. To the natives, this was but another manifestation of the power of the Gods who had now returned from whence they came.

The natives had discovered ‘religion.’ The all powerful Gods were responsible for their existence and their welfare. Those disobeying their edicts would, most assuredly, bring disaster upon themselves and upon all if they were not exterminated. It did not take long before different interpretations of what the Gods had commanded were being proposed, in turn giving rise initially to different sects and ultimately to different religions. Since each claimed to know the ‘truth’, others paying homage to false Gods had to be eliminated. A series of religious wars ensued. Even when the conflicts served economic gain, the we-they syndrome often fanned the flames of hatred and bigotry. The ferocity of each succeeding conflict grew to a level never before matched anywhere in the known universe and each was the one to end war forever. Evidently, the experiment was a total failure.

An equally if not more disturbing phenomenon was also noted. These wars served as the impetus for the most rapid technological advance ever to take place anywhere. The evolution from a primitive sub-species to an advanced technological planet was unprecedented in its rapidity. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that there must be a steep linear or possibly an exponential relation between conflict and progress. The potential results of disseminating this idea are too horrific to contemplate. It is for this reason that the results of the expedition have been kept secret.

Finally, it turns out that, as yet, the planet not visited but monitored has not evidenced even one major conflict, despite the reptilian characteristics of its dominant species. For reasons that remain unfathomable, they do not exhibit traits leading to aggressive and destructive behavior. They seldom kill one of their own. It seems that they have not been cursed with a sense of right and wrong, and of morality. They have a culture and a technology consonant with their natural environment. They are the exception to the general rule and are to be commended for it.

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March, 1996
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