

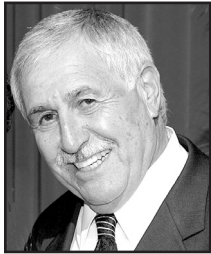
# Cutler Bay

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## How will we know when we have won?

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I don't often write about international topics but every once in a while I feel a need to vent, so here goes:

I keep hearing politicians speak of the "War on Terror." Being kind of a war buff and amateur historian, I have tried to apply what I know to what is going on in this war now. In my wars, there was always a specific enemy — they wore unusual helmets, had different tanks and planes, wore different uniforms and had specific leaders and generals who had been trained in warfare at different military academies.

There were specific geographic targets and you could measure progress by looking at the enemy lines and seeing them being pushed back, rivers crossed, islands captured and units surrendering.

Once the opposing forces had had enough — lost enough men, ships, tanks, and factories — they would come to their senses and offer to surrender. They would meet in an old railway car, on a battleship, or perhaps at a building designed for such activity and sign a formal surrender document. This usually included the total disarmament of the losing country, and plans for occupation by the victor as well as plans for transition to a peaceful future.

It was all cut and dry. The victors could celebrate in their streets, have huge fireworks displays and most everyone was happy — sometimes even the losers, because the bloodshed was finally over.

I try to compare this knowledge to the present day "War on Terror." How do our soldiers know the difference between the good guys and the bad guys until the bad guys start shooting at them or blowing up some trucks or tanks? Is there a central city where their government is based and where a leader might be asked to surrender? Who actually leads the Taliban and Al Qaeda?

At first, I was told that once Saddam Hussein was captured

the strife would end in Iraq. That obviously hasn't happened. Now we are told that all we have to do is finally capture and kill Osama Bin Laden. Somehow, although it might make us feel good, I don't think that will end it all. Some other martyr will step up and it will continue.

I think I understood what the Japanese and Germans wanted to accomplish back in the 1940s and once they realized that these goals were impossible and that their own people were paying a horrible price, they gave up, signed the documents and it was over!

Now, I frankly don't understand what motivates the people in Afghanistan. They aren't set on world domination but do want to control what their own people think and how they pray and to whom. They apparently are willing to die for their beliefs, thinking that if they do, they will be rewarded in some mystical place that they perceive. This makes it tough for us because how can you threaten to kill someone who looks forward to dying?

General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of our troops in Afghanistan has changed our strategy there. He believes that bombing targets that may or may not contain terrorist suspects is only angering the population there even more against us and serves little purpose, but yet he wants even more troops to try and swing the populace in our favor. I would love to see him do that, but I am not too optimistic.

The people in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan are quite different in their beliefs and wants than we Americans are. A theocracy suits them just fine, so promising free elections and democracy is not first on their agenda. Knowing this, I for one would hate to see even one more American life lost while we try to figure out what others have tried to figure out for hundreds of years, without success.

So back to my opening question: If this is truly a war, how will we know when we have won?

*Other articles of national importance can be viewed at Ernie's website at <[www.sochin.com](http://www.sochin.com)>.*