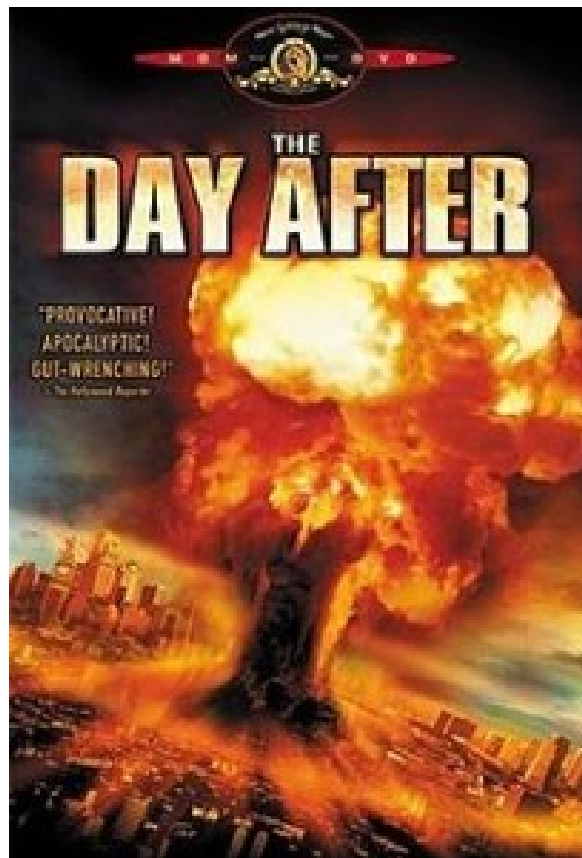


PETRAEUS PLANS FOR THE DAY AFTER



The title of Petraeus' op-ed is clearly trying to play off this 1983 made for TV movie about Lawrence, Kansas after a nuclear war.

On September 26, 2004, the Washington Post disgraced itself by giving David Petraeus space to write an op-ed in which he spouted pure bullshit on how well his vaunted "training" program was going in Iraq. Of course, that program failed multiple times with Petraeus never being called to account. Despite clear military regulations prohibiting political activity by members of the military, Petraeus' op-ed was seen by some as providing an endorsement which gave a significant boost to George W. Bush's re-election campaign at a time when public opinion on the war in Iraq was beginning to sour. Just short of ten years later (and after his career got Broadwelled, I mean, broadsided), Petraeus is back on the pages of

the Neocon Daily today, warning us that the “US needs to plan for the day after an Iran deal”.

The reviews of Petraeus’ newest op-ed are now in, and it has been called “Provocative!”, “Apocalyptic!” and even “Gut-Wrenching!” Oh, wait. That’s how the 1983 made for TV movie *The Day After* is described on its DVD cover. My mistake. But clearly Petraeus is playing off that old title. The old movie deals with life in Lawrence, Kansas after a nuclear war and Petraeus is now telling us we must prepare for life after preventing Iran getting the chance to wage nuclear war.

The central tenet of the op-ed is that Iran is “the leading state sponsor of terrorism”. Like most of what Petraeus does or says, that statement is just flat wrong. Even though the US (including the military when Petraeus was head of Central Command and the CIA when Petraeus led it) never admits it publicly, the rest of the world knows that Saudi Arabia is by far the largest state sponsor of terrorism. There are even Wikileaks cables confirming the role of Saudi money in supporting Sunni extremists. And note that the single most important organizer of state sponsored terrorism, Bandar bin Sultan, is now returning to his role after a brief interruption.

It appears that Petraeus stopped paying attention to world events when he resigned from the CIA in disgrace in November of 2012, because nowhere in his anti-Iran screed do we see any acknowledgement that in June of 2013, Hassan Rouhani was elected as Iran’s new president and has ushered in a new, more moderate outlook that is credited with providing the window for diplomatic progress toward an agreement on Iran’s nuclear technology.

Okay, so here is Petraeus (and co-author Vance Serchuk, who was Joe Lieberman’s foreign policy advisor after cutting his teeth at the American Enterprise Institute—you just can’t make this shit up!) framing the problem for us:

Largely absent from the debate, however, has been a fuller consideration of the strategic implications a nuclear agreement could have on the U.S. position in the Middle East.

Such an assessment must begin by considering the consequences of lifting the majority of sanctions on Iran – and of Iran resuming normal trade with the world's major economies. This prospect is what provides our strongest leverage to persuade the Iranian government to abandon key elements of its nuclear program.

But lifting sanctions would also lead to the economic empowerment of a government that is the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Indeed, even under crippling sanctions, Iran has managed to provide robust support to extremist proxies as part of its broader geopolitical agenda across the Middle East and beyond – activities antithetical to U.S. interests and to those of our closest allies.

It is possible that a nuclear deal would pave the way to a broader detente in Iran's relations with the United States and its neighbors. It is, however, more plausible that removing sanctions would strengthen Tehran's ability to project malign influence in its near-abroad, including Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Arabian peninsula and the Palestinian territories.

Just wow. Petraeus is actually using Syria as a primary example of Iran as a sponsor of terrorism. That's right, the same Syria where Petraeus's CIA started the training of CIA death squads modeled after his Iraq death squad program and that has given us "moderate" death squads who make the news by eating an opponent's heart. Syria is one of the last places on Earth

where the US should try to claim the moral high ground.

I do, however, agree with Petraeus' point that US sanctions have devastated Iran's economy. But given the level of suffering for most Iranian citizens, it seems that Rouhani will be under tremendous pressure make restoration of Iran's economy the highest priority under any scenario with the sanctions mostly lifted.

It is not until the halfway point in this grossly belligerent piece that Petraeus finally, grudgingly, admits that a negotiated deal with Iran on its nuclear technology is actually better than military action against sites where Iran carries out the work. And yet, the rest of the piece is devoted to keeping the attitude relating to Iran as close to a war footing as possible.

Finally, Petraeus gives us a five point plan on how we can prepare for that day after an agreement with Iran is signed. I won't bother with working through all of them, but the middle one circles back to the issue of Syria:

Third, the United States needs to look hard at its position on Syria, arguably now the central front in a broader struggle for primacy in the Middle East. Recent reports that the Obama administration has been considering various forms of increased support to the Syrian opposition – including providing a limited number of strategically significant weapons systems – are encouraging. These reports, if true, would reflect recognition that a much more robust, focused and well-resourced effort is required to reverse the Assad regime's current battlefield momentum, which it has achieved in large part due to Iranian help.

Petraeus can hardly contain his excitement about

providing MANPADS, presumably through Bandar, for those “moderate” rebels in Syria to unleash new levels of hell in a region where civilians are starving while suffering atrocities at the hands of both sides in this conflict with no sign of ending.

With Petraeus appearing yet again in the Post, we can only wonder if there is yet another movement underway to launder his image and get him ready for a political run. Recall that in 2011, there was an ill-fated push by political groups to get Petraeus a fifth star to burnish his credentials for a potential presidential run in 2012. One would think that his spectacular failures in the Broadwell affair would have doomed him politically forever, or even that his role in holding back intelligence on the Benghazi attack for political reasons would keep him out of politics, but I can’t help wondering if I’m still going to have the ass-kissing little chickenshit around to bash for many more years to come.