

# A Never-Ending War? Consequences of 11 September



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# A Never-Ending War? Consequences of 11 September

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## Executive Summary

The immediate aftermath of 11 September included a profound and widespread sympathy for the people of the United States. Although the twin towers meant more to Americans than to the world as a whole, the sheer human loss, and the vision of the collapse of the towers, reverberated around the world. Since then, domestic support in the United States for what has come to be known as ‘the war on terror’ has remained high, but across the world there is a developing unease. It has begun to surface as tough US military responses concentrate on capturing or killing perceived terrorists in a series of actions that seems set to escalate and has already killed far more people than died in the atrocities in New York and Washington.

Admiral Gregory Johnson, Commander in Chief Allied Forces, Southern Europe, speaking at a conference in London in February 2002, said he could see no end to the war on terrorism. General Lord Guthrie, former UK Chief of Defence Staff, responded “*That’s why it can’t be called a war; wars have ceasefires and end.*”

This paper examines the development of US security policy in the first six months after the attacks, and does so in the context of the attitudes and policies of the Bush administration as they developed since taking office in January 2001.<sup>1</sup> It then goes on to look at the effects of the actions in relation to the aim of defeating terrorism and explores the further development of US policy in the context of President Bush’s *State of the Union* address, the new defence budget, and the identification of numerous paramilitary organisations across the world as threats to the United States. The differing views becoming clear in Europe and the majority world are then assessed, together with the long-term consequences of US security policy. In conclusion some suggestions are offered to throw light on this policy and propose alternatives.

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## After the Attacks

One early consequence of the attacks was a considerable increase in co-operation between security and intelligence agencies in the west and elsewhere, leading to a world-wide investigation into those responsible for the attacks. Attention focused almost at once on the al-Qaida network and its presumed leader, Osama bin Laden, and it became clear that the attacks had been developed by paramilitaries operating in a number of countries, although most of the immediate organisation had been done in Germany and the United States itself.

From the start, there was little attempt made to understand the motivations for this action, or to see it as part of a longer-term strategy or, indeed, to investigate the political context. While such issues may have been analysed in the deeper recesses of military and security agencies, the more general political process concentrated almost entirely on seeing the perpetrators simply as fundamentalists acting from motives of sheer hatred for the United States and all it stood for.

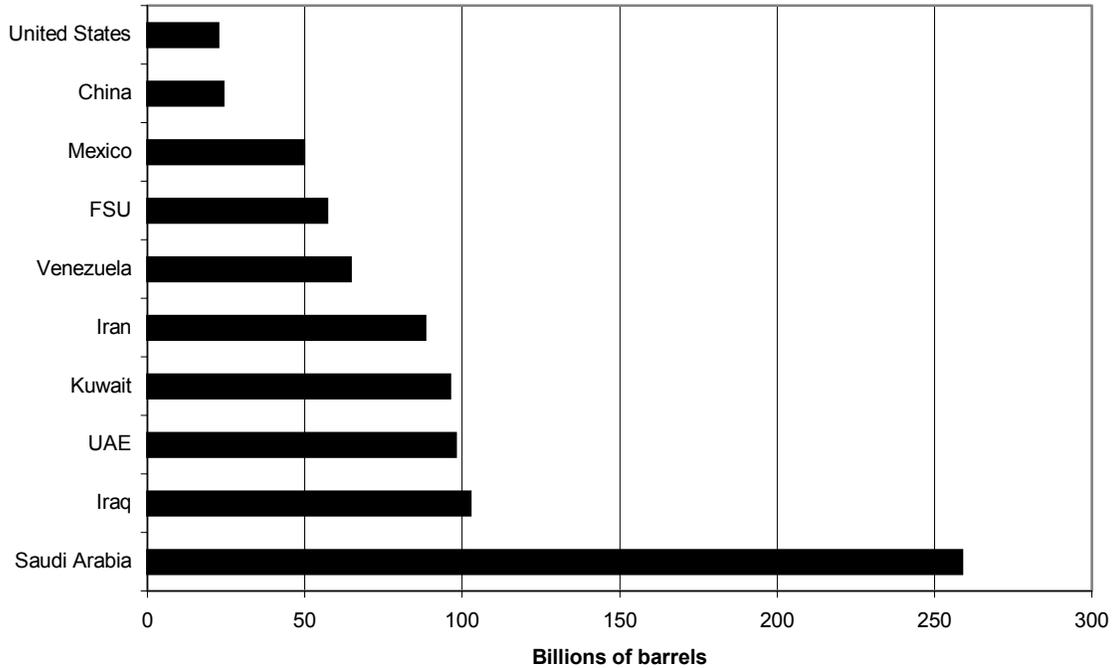
A number of issues appear to have been ignored. First was the fact that antagonism to the United States from the al-Qaida network and those associated with it had been developing for more than a decade, with a number of substantial attacks on US interests in the Middle East and elsewhere, as well as the original attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993. A further issue was that Osama bin Laden and many of his associates had first become paramilitaries as part of an international response to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, a response that included substantial US aid for such anti-Soviet action during the final stages of the Cold War.

Perhaps most significant was the failure to accept that al-Qaida had developed primarily in the context of the politics of the Gulf region following the war against Iraq in 1991. While there was relatively little support for Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and its military defeat the following year, there developed a growing opposition to the western military presence in several Gulf states and especially Saudi Arabia. This antagonism to the United States, in particular, was in parallel with a belief that the House of Saud could not be considered a legitimate governing authority for Saudi Arabia as it was allowing foreign military forces to 'occupy' the Kingdom of the Two Holy Places. This specifically religious orientation was reinforced by a widespread belief that the United States, in particular, was exerting an unacceptable control over the Gulf states because of its determination to maintain security of oil supplies.

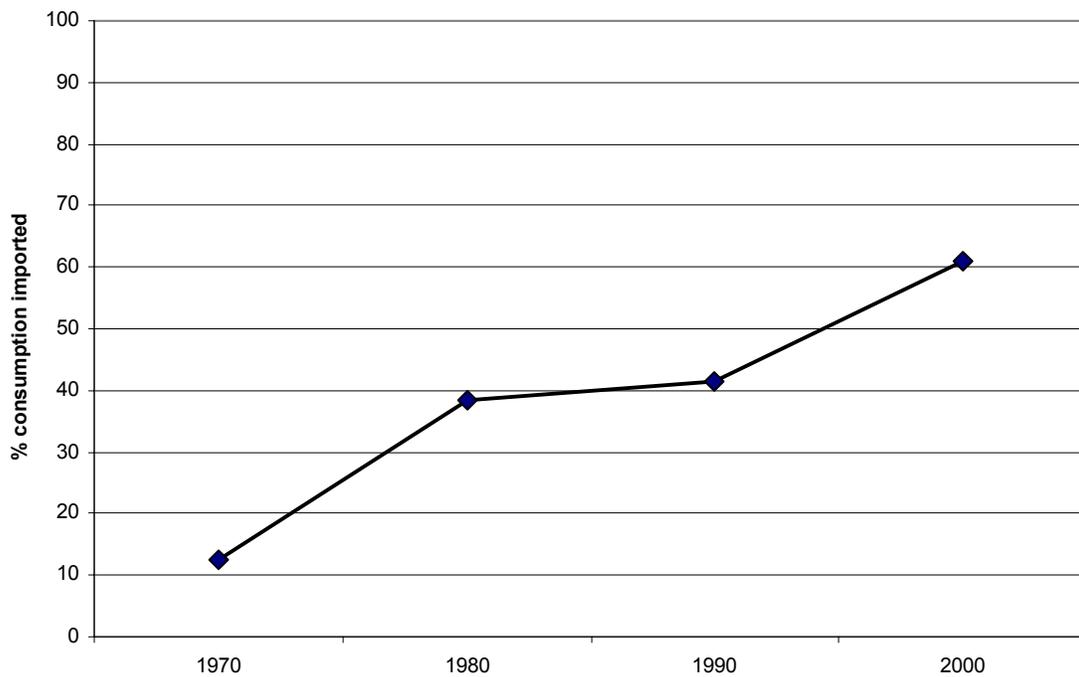
All of these motives go largely undiscussed within the general US political scene, with virtually no public attention paid to the strategic significance of Gulf oil. Given that the oil reserves of the region comprise two-thirds of world total reserves, that the United States is now massively dependent on imported oil, and that there has been a substantial and sustained US military presence in the Gulf, this is odd. It is part of a persistent dissonance between US perceptions of terrorists as people solely concerned with illogical policies of attacking the US, and the motivations of those very groups arising, in part, from its military posture in the region. As Samuel Brittan of the Financial Times puts it:

“If there is one policy which makes political and economic sense it is for the West to reduce its dependence on Gulf oil in general and Saudi Arabian oil in particular.”<sup>2</sup>

## World Oil Reserves



## US Oil Import Dependency



## The War in Afghanistan

The al-Qaida network, with its bases and support organisations in Afghanistan, was quickly identified as the organisation responsible for the attacks. There was some surprise that the US did not take immediate military action, perhaps in the form of a more substantial version of the cruise missile raids mounted after the earlier attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, but this would have been little more than symbolic. In practice, plans were rapidly drawn up for a more general war in Afghanistan, directed at the al-Qaida network and the Taliban regime that was perceived to be acting as its host.

The Taliban regime was still engaged in fighting a bitter civil war that had developed since it began to gain control of parts of Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. The regime was rigid and brutal in its repression of dissent and control of women's lives, but had been tolerably popular on first taking power in place of warlords and political factions that had reduced Afghanistan to near chaos after the Soviet withdrawal at the end of the 1980s. By the middle of 2001, the Taliban regime controlled much of the country, drawing its support principally from people in the Pashtun areas, but extending well beyond these. Only in the north of the country did other factions, centred primarily on the Northern Alliance, oppose it.

From an original war aim of destroying the al-Qaida network, the United States quickly extended its intentions to the overthrow of the Taliban regime itself, partly in the belief that this would prevent Afghanistan again being used as a base for such a paramilitary organisation. The methods used to execute this plan had three main elements. One was to use special forces for reconnaissance and target selection. The second was to use air power extensively to attack Taliban militia and the third, and most crucial element, was to take sides in the Afghan civil war, aiding anti-Taliban forces with arms and air power to enable them to defeat the Taliban. This appeared to have been accomplished within about three months, but the results were, in many ways, thoroughly misleading.

Among the many ironies of the resulting war was the arming of Northern Alliance forces by Russia and its acquisition of significant influence in Afghanistan for the first time since the end of the Cold War. Much more significant, though, was the reaction of the Taliban militia. In a few cases, there was heavy fighting, especially in the northern part of the country, but the much more common practice was for the Taliban simply to withdraw in the face of heavy air attack supporting Northern Alliance forces.

The withdrawal from Kabul, in particular, was accomplished virtually overnight, with little loss of life, and the eventual loss of the key Taliban city of Kandahar followed the melting away of most of the forces, either into Pakistan or to protected locations in the more mountainous areas or, more commonly, simply back into their own communities. One of the clearest indicators of this was that very few members of the Taliban leadership were either killed or captured.

What was true for the Taliban was even more the case for the al-Qaida network. Very few of the more senior members of the network were captured, and few appear to have been killed. Indeed, there are many indications that much of the leadership was not even in Afghanistan after the war started. An assessment from FBI sources at the end of 2001

indicated that the war in Afghanistan had done no more than limit the capabilities of the al-Qaida network by 30%.<sup>3</sup> That this was so, has specific implications for future US action against the network, and much more general implications for its overall strategy.

## The al-Qaida Strategy

For the al-Qaida network, the attacks of 11 September formed part of a long-term strategy that had been developing for at least a decade and was envisaged as part of a process that could stretch over many years. It makes sense to see this strategy as a programme for 25 years or more, and one that may be in loose federation with other paramilitary groups. Its principal aims are the eviction of western troops from the Gulf and the replacement of the House of Saud with what would be considered to be a legitimate Islamic regime. The attacks of 11 September form a particular part of this strategy, intended to produce certain results that fit the long-term aim.

The World Trade Center towers represented the core of US economic and business power, and the Pentagon was the centre of its military power. Attacking these extraordinary symbols was a process that had been planned over a long period of time, involving paramilitaries and their supporters in several countries. There would have been several anticipated results, not least the focusing of world attention on the network itself. Further major elements were an expectation that the United States would respond with great force against the perceived perpetrators, that this response would focus initially on Afghanistan and that it would lead to a substantially increased US military presence in the Middle East and South West Asia.

Such an increased presence would, in due course, incite further anti-American sentiments and support for the network and its allied groups, but an immediate war in Afghanistan would involve heavy use of force and the possible defeat of anti-American forces in the country. It follows that the network dispersed its forces either before or immediately after 11 September, with many of them moving to nearby countries including Pakistan, parts of Russia and Georgia.

There were a number of occasions during the war when anti-Taliban forces engaged al-Qaida paramilitaries, and this may have happened because the network's leadership had not expected such a close association between the United States and the Northern Alliance. In general, though, the al-Qaida network lost a number of bases, much logistical support and some of its members killed or captured, but a very large part of it, and most of its leadership, survived the war and retain a capacity for further action as part of their long-term aims.

Moreover, anticipated effects of the 11 September attack have certainly been fulfilled. The United States has greatly increased its forces in the region, and has developed a remarkable network of new military bases across Central Asia.

These include substantial numbers of troops in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgystan as well as in Afghanistan itself, and some initial deployments in Georgia. Moreover, in a

development that must be hugely welcomed by the al-Qaida network, the United States has developed a much stronger support for the Sharon government in Israel, where its

policies against the Palestinians in the occupied territories are inciting greater opposition in the region to the State of Israel and to the United States.

In short, the war in Afghanistan has so far damaged but certainly not destroyed the al-Qaida network, while ensuring that its longer-term aims are, on balance, aided rather than limited by wider regional developments. In Afghanistan, too, the war has had unexpected effects, suggesting that it will be very difficult for the country to develop in conditions of peace and stability.

## The Aftermath of War

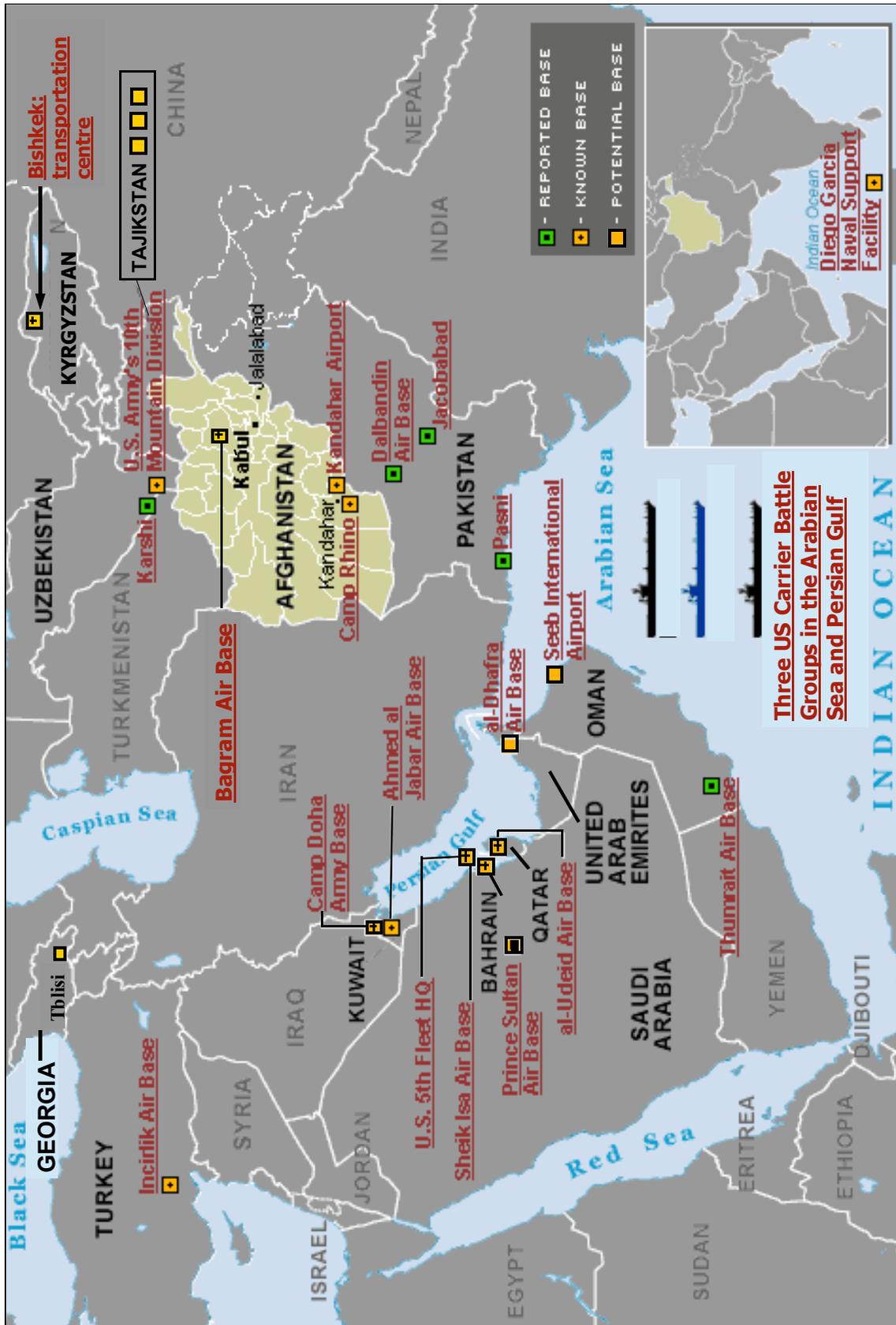
The decision of the United States to adopt a war strategy involving heavy bombing in support of anti-Taliban forces has had a number of effects. One of the most important has been the extent of the civilian casualties, with at least 1000 and possibly as many as 4000 people killed directly, as well as many thousands of people dying as a result of disease, hunger, exposure and other effects that are consequent on the disruption caused by the war.

US forces have used precision-guided munitions on many occasions, but have also employed area bombing and the specific use of area-impact munitions such as cluster bombs. On a number of occasions, area bombing was used against perceived Taliban militia clusters, but these rarely formed distinct front lines and were often interspersed with farms, hamlets and villages. There were also a number of instances of mis-targeting, and these continued after the overthrow of the Taliban regime as US forces sought out dispersed Taliban and al-Qaida units.

A second aspect of the war has been the flooding of the country with weapons, primarily as the United States armed anti-Taliban forces, often by means of supplies from Russia. This has resulted in heavily armed groups operating in many parts of the country, with a level of banditry, looting and armed robbery that has not been seen since before the Taliban came to power. A further issue is that the destruction of the Taliban regime has resulted in a more general problem of disorder and a return to the warlordism that plagued the country in the early 1990s. Moreover, as warlord factions exercise control in different parts of Afghanistan, they will seek resources to maintain their control, with a strong probability that one source of finance will be increased production of opium.

While the Taliban regime was brutal and repressive, it imposed a rigid form of order that was lost when it fell, but more importantly, has not been replaced by a more acceptable order. The interim administration has been welcomed in Kabul and a few other cities, but has little remit in most of the country. Furthermore, the International Security Assistance Force has a very limited and short-term remit, operating almost entirely in Kabul and the immediate area. Repeated requests from UN officials, and the interim government, for external aid to increase this commitment have not been answered. The United States, in particular, is unwilling to engage in this type of operation and is still much more concerned with conducting further offensive military operations.

# Map of US Bases in Central Asia



## The Developing War on Terror

A critical analysis of the five-month war in Afghanistan suggests that the Taliban regime has been deposed, the al-Qaida network has been dispersed, and US bases have become established across Central Asia. At the same time, Taliban forces have the capability to re-group, there have been considerable civilian casualties in Afghanistan, the country is highly unstable and disorderly and the al-Qaida network is substantially capable of further action. In addition, US support for the Sharon government in Israel is producing a widespread anti-American mood that goes well beyond the specific opposition of those people previously supporting al-Qaida.

Furthermore, the original attacks in New York and Washington resulted in wide-ranging economic effects in the United States and many other countries, as well as the appalling human costs of the attacks themselves. It is perhaps in part due to the recognition of the severity of the attacks that a more general war on terror has developed that goes well beyond the war in Afghanistan itself. The broad outlines of this 'war' are becoming clear and they have three components – a substantially expanded defence budget, the declaration of numerous paramilitary groups as enemies of the United States, and the identification of a number of regimes that are unacceptable to the United States and have been categorised as an 'axis of evil'.

Shortly after 11 September, requests to increase the 2002 defence budget were agreed, and there will be a further substantial increase in 2003, resulting in a planned budget for that year of \$379 billion (\$64 billion higher than two years earlier, a figure close to twice that of Britain's entire defence budget). The new budget includes substantial spending on unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) the pilot-less aircraft that can carry missiles and have already been used in Afghanistan; four Trident ballistic missile submarines will have their nuclear missiles removed so that each can be re-fitted with up to 150 conventionally-armed Tomahawk cruise missiles; and there will be a substantial increase in funding to counter attacks involving biological weapons. Specific aspects of the budget give an indication of the developing defence posture. One example is funding to aid the Colombian government's establishment of a helicopter-borne 'Critical Infrastructure Brigade' to protect a 480-mile oil pipeline owned by Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum.

The list of paramilitary groups considered to be enemies of the United States has expanded rapidly, and now includes Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Hamas. According to CIA Director George J. Tenet, "*if these groups feel that US actions are threatening their existence, they may begin targeting Americans directly*".<sup>4</sup> In other cases, too, the link to anti-American paramilitary action is tenuous at best. He continues, "*the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) poses a serious threat to US interests in Latin America because it associates us with the government it is fighting against*".<sup>5</sup>

In recent months, the United States has substantially increased its support for the government of the Philippines in its counter-insurgency operations against Islamic paramilitaries; Nepal has requested an increase in aid for its fight against Maoist rebels; and there are indications of possible action against al-Qaida supporters in Yemen and

Georgia. In direct response to 11 September, a Presidential Directive was made that military courts be enabled to try those suspected of paramilitary activities, that these courts could meet in secret, would not need to involve juries and could give sentences up to and including the death penalty. In a further development, a number of restrictions concerning CIA rules of operation dating back to the Carter era were removed, and in January 2002, a CIA UCAV was used in an assassination attempt against a presumed al-Qaida leader in Afghanistan.

The President's authorisation may have made more likely the assassinations of a number of human rights and ethnic leaders not connected in any way with al-Qaida but who did represent bothersome problems for US interests. These include West Papuan independence leader Theys Eluay who was assassinated by Indonesian Army units after he was kidnapped on 11 November 2001. The assassins were members of KOPASSUS, a special operations unit trained by US Special Forces and CIA personnel, and involved in massacres in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation of that country. Eluay was opposed to the activities of Freeport McMoran, a Louisiana-based mining company that has exploited West Papua's natural resources and is accused by local activists of supporting local Indonesian army officers.<sup>6</sup>

In the 2002 *State of the Union* address to Congress, President Bush extended the 'war on terror' by identifying a state-level threat in the form of states that are considered opposed to US interests and are developing weapons of mass destruction. Citing Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an 'axis of evil', he indicated that US policy would be to prevent, by force if necessary, the ability of these states to deploy such weapons. In the weeks following his address, there were strong indications from senior officers in the administration that military action was being planned against Iraq.

Such action to destroy the Saddam Hussein regime is thus an aspect of the 'war on terror', but it brings considerable dangers for escalation. In the 1991 war, Iraq was faced with military defeat by powerful coalition forces, following its invasion of Kuwait the previous year. Recognising this, the regime developed its prime aim as being regime survival, and this would be the aim in a further confrontation. In 1991, for example, most of the elite Iraqi forces, including six of the eight republican guard divisions and all of the Special republican Guard forces were kept away from the war zone. Among other things, this helped ensure that post war Kurdish and Shi'ite rebellions could be suppressed with force.

More significantly in the current context, the regime weaponised its rudimentary chemical and biological capabilities and was in a position to launch missiles and aircraft armed with anthrax, botulinum toxin and other agents if the regime had been faced with destruction. The broad details of this were known to U.S intelligence at the time and it is possible that this contributed to the decision not to pursue the regime's forces to Baghdad. It should be recognised that such a circumstance would certainly prevail once more if the regime was clearly threatened with destruction as part of the Bush administration's 'war on terror'.

Thus, an attack on Iraq aimed at terminating the Saddam Hussein regime should be expected to lead to the use of any weapons of mass destruction that the regime might be able to muster. The potential for escalation should such use cause substantial casualties to

US forces, or civilians in Gulf states or Israel is considerable, and is one reason for counselling extreme caution in such a military action.

## The New American Century

The wide-ranging military developments that have followed the 11 September attacks indicate a period of sustained military activity against those considered to present a threat to the United States or its interests, whether they be paramilitary organisations or states, or even individuals. In part, this stems from the sheer impact of the attacks in New York and Washington, but it also relates to the much wider security paradigm that has been consolidated under the Bush administration.

This has included a marked tendency towards unilateralism and an avoidance of multilateral co-operation except when it is clearly in US interests. Examples of the former are legion and include opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, proposals for an international criminal court and for negotiations to prevent the weaponisation of space. The United States is withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, it has ended participation in the Kyoto climate change discussions and has been critical of the land mine treaty and of UN proposals on controlling light arms transfers.

Much of this relates to a much deeper conviction, particularly strong on the Republican Right, that the United States has an historic mission to provide world leadership towards a globalised free market in which its own security interests are best served by ensuring that the US economic model is replicated across the world. Under such circumstances, the 21st century would rightfully be the New American Century, and the attacks of 11 September represented an appalling and hugely dangerous challenge to such a worldview. In that sense, there was a perception of losing control, and an urgent need to regain control, a process best achieved by targeting those groups perceived to be violently antagonistic to US interests.<sup>7</sup>

The more the 'war on terror' develops, so the unease and tensions come to the fore in terms of the relationship between the United States and western Europe. From a European perspective, the unilateralist leanings of the Bush administration caused concern well before 11 September. To different extents, western European states were far more disposed to multilateral approaches to arms control and climate change and they were concerned at the lack of progress between Israel and Palestine and the US withdrawal from engagement with North Korea. There was even a certain recognition that free market globalisation might not be successful in delivering a reasonably equitable level of economic development across the world. After 11 September, there was huge sympathy for the United States but this has developed into more and more substantial concern as the 'war on terror' has developed, especially with the prospect of military action against Iraq.

There is also considerable anxiety in NATO. When article 5 was invoked after 11 September NATO became a *de facto* global alliance, but the US did not use NATO in

Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> There are doubts whether the US will ever want to use NATO to fight a shooting war, because of problems of inadequacy, lack of inter-operability of equipment and the problems of maintaining a coalition. Furthermore, there is the view that NATO cannot be used for anti-terror work because *“no-one with good intelligence will want to share it with 20 countries”*.<sup>9</sup> General Klaus Naumann, the former Chair of NATO’s Military Committee, is deeply worried over the widening gap between the US and Europe. Military means, in his view, are not the only answer to terrorism. *“We must have a strategy which addresses root causes, addresses disparities, and invite the US to join in this.”*<sup>10</sup>

European members of NATO are being asked to increase defence budgets in line with the US increases, the emphasis being on ‘capability, capability and capability’. Europeans have tended to be as interested in enemy intentions as enemy capability, and some point out that the US, at the most powerful moment in its history with the largest and most sophisticated capability in the world, was utterly vulnerable.

Moving beyond Europe, the ‘majority world’ view of the South is quite different. Here, the war is more commonly seen alongside Northern dominance of the international financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, as well as attitudes to climate change and the tardy and thoroughly limited progress on debt relief.

Increasing numbers in the South perceive the evolving situation as no less than modern imperialism, using the full panoply of mechanisms to bend the will and shape the global order to suit the preferences and needs of the major advanced industrial nations. Growing resentment in the South at the sense of powerlessness in the face of Northern arrogance and impunity breeds frustration, which hardly provides fertile ground for development or peace or building the international community. Now, the fear of speaking up in defence of one’s own interests has been further exacerbated by the new dictum, ‘you are either with us or against us’.<sup>11</sup>

What is so striking is the near total difference in views. On the one hand is the United States, still deeply affected by the attacks of 11 September and with an administration that had already adopted a pro-active security outlook. It is determined to maintain control, and to counter any perceived trans-national threat to its security by whatever means that are necessary, and with or without the support of friendly states. On the other hand is a majority world view that still sympathises with the tragedies of 11 September but sees the United States as in the vanguard of sustaining an unjust international order in which socio-economic divisions are steadily widening.

## A Rational Approach for an Interdependent World

A stark feature of the confrontation between the Sharon government and the Palestinians in the occupied territories has been the cycle of violence that has developed, with every increasing effort at control by the Israeli armed forces resulting in a further radicalisation of Palestinians and the recruiting of further paramilitaries and suicide bombers. There is little or no realisation within the Sharon administration that its security policies are proving to be deeply counter-productive.

If we accept the analysis that one motive for the 11 September attacks was to incite a strong US military response, and that the al-Qaida network and its allies expect ultimately to benefit from such a response, then there is a strong reason to expect that the 'war on terror' itself could prove as counter-productive as current Israeli security policies. But the issue is actually much wider than that, and relates to our response to 11 September when we in the western world experienced a fear that the previous sense of prosperity and well-being was threatened.

This fragility at the heart of our economic system is directly related to the fact that we have become an interdependent world. Whether we like it or not, the system is woven into a powerful trans-national net of our own making. We have become dependent to a remarkable degree on the actions of people across the world – not only people who are part of growth economies, or states exporting resources we need, but poor and marginalised people too.

South Africa is an illuminating microcosm of this: despite all its economic and military strength, the apartheid state had to change, because without the full participation and consent of all who lived in it, the society was doomed to explode and disintegrate. As South African economist Francis Wilson puts it:

*This point is well understood within the context of the nation state but it is an understanding that seldom extends beyond the national boundary in the thinking, let alone planning, of even the most ardent democrats. It is the fault line in the politics of our time.*<sup>12</sup>

In other words, all the peoples of the world are now, as it were, the peoples of one country. The dawning of this realisation, beyond the cliché, brings with it some troublesome implications. The first is that we in the West can no longer treat the rest of the world badly, without a boomerang effect. It is a mistake to suppose that a government can promote and participate in a global economy, and at the same time act exclusively in its own interest by unilaterally abandoning international treaties and standing apart from international collaborative negotiations to address global issues. Still less can it expect to re-make the world community in its own particular image. This is the course being followed by the current US administration, in the belief that the extent of its military superiority over any and all other nations is sufficient to deter or protect against repercussions. This belief is dated, since the era of 'might is right' is over. Another era has begun, demonstrated tragically on 11 September, where military might has already proved unable to protect the people of the United States.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the state can no longer be seen as the final community, because national boundaries have been forever weakened by information technology, by multinationals, by environmental challenges and by global religions and other identities. We have been pushed whether we like it or not to a point where humankind hangs together as a whole or not at all. Now, in a way, all war is civil war. The issue therefore is not how to fight war but how to move from war to law as a way of governing humanity's affairs. Power alone is not enough. The lessons of South Africa, Russia and Serbia have shown that a nation however powerful will fall without the consent of the governed. Therefore at a global level now we have to find ways of building participation, rather than projecting power.

Secondly, there are implications for our export policies. We have developed complex legislation to decide which military technology may be exported to whom, when the reality is that the weapons we export end up being used against us. The CIA trains one set of violent men in terror tactics and provides them with arms, only to find themselves fighting against these same men later: it happened in Kosovo, it happened in Macedonia, it happened in Afghanistan.

Third, there are implications for our ethical outlook. We can not any longer afford the double standards which said it was acceptable for 'us' (the permanent members of the UN Security Council) to have nuclear weapons, but not for 'them' (for example, India and Pakistan). Nor can we continue to condone and subsidise arms exports, while condemning the uses to which they are put.<sup>13</sup>

## Responding to Violence

Overall, there are profound implications for our concepts of defence and security. Whatever the best efforts of the military, the intelligence agencies and others, security for any country can no longer depend on military forces. Indeed, responding to violence with more violence will more likely set in process a cycle of violence – in a sense it is the very currency terrorism understands.

The British and many of the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland slowly learned through decades of violence that it escalates the problem and does not solve it. Internment, detention without trial and vigorous counterinsurgency measures proved to be excellent recruiting agents for the paramilitaries. In a similar way, a world-wide 'war on terror', attacking any paramilitary groups that are seen as a potential threat will be deeply counterproductive, leading to endless conflict. It will further exacerbate the fracture lines that are becoming clear in the world community as the divide between the wealthy and the marginalised grows wider. These fracture lines become evident in insurgencies and anti-elite actions across the world, whether in Mexico, Nepal, the Middle East or South East Asia, and our response, all too often, is to maintain or regain control, addressing the symptoms and not the causes.

This is not to say that the 11 September attacks came from a desperate underclass of marginalised people across the globe, driven to violence by an utter frustration at the possibilities of peaceful change; yet there are lessons to learn that are most certainly relevant to the wider global context. One, inevitably, is that the atrocities demonstrated all too clearly the manner in which an unquestionably powerful state has been shown to be vulnerable to paramilitary attack. Another is that al-Qaida has drawn much of its strength from the increasingly bitter opposition to a foreign military presence in the Gulf region, support for an unacceptable regime in Saudi Arabia and for a notably hard-line government in Israel. Finally, al-Qaida and similar networks draw particular support from the 'demographic bulge' of young people growing up in the Middle East and South West Asia who see themselves as marginalised and with diminishing prospects.

So far, the response to 11 September has resulted in the ousting of one regime in a single impoverished country and some damage to the network directly responsible for the attacks. The factors that lend support to that network and its associated groups have not

been addressed, and military action may now extend to Iraq, a decade of aggressive containment having cemented the Saddam Hussein regime in power while leading to sustained hardship for most Iraqis. Such military action has massive in-built dangers, not least from the risk of an escalation to weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, it will be viewed across the region as a further proof of an anti-Arab and anti-Islamic policy from the United States, further stimulating an anti-American mood and providing more support for the paramilitaries.

In Afghanistan, too, although the Taliban have been driven from power, the deeper problems of the country have not been addressed by bombing, and far too little aid is offered for post-conflict peace-building. One of the first priorities is to provide external help to ensure a return to order, while seeking to cut off the supply of weapons and stimulate economic development, providing paramilitaries and guerrilla fighters with viable alternatives.

Communities where war has been endemic for decades have to go through a pro-active programme of healing; left unaddressed the cycle of violence will simply go round again. Community leaders need to be selected and trained for mediation, in order to start the pain-staking process of building trust between communities. The empowerment of Afghan women is a priority; one of the reasons for the stagnation and violence of the Taliban regime was the denial to women of education, rights and a voice. Existing women's organisations require resources to expand and duplicate their training facilities, workshops and courses, and counselling will be essential for women abused and raped by the Taliban and other factions.

## Conclusion

As in Afghanistan, so across much of the world, if further rebellions and paramilitary and terrorist organisations are to be countered, then responding with violence will do no more than make the situation worse. Unless core issues of marginalisation and disempowerment are addressed, the end result will be an increased support for such groups, and an expanded cycle of violence.

For the future, then, what is a reasonable prognosis? Although it might seem a rather crude device to present just two choices, simplification may be helpful here. One possibility is that 11 September reinforces all of the core elements of the security paradigm, and that the major effort is concentrated on maintaining control of an unstable and evidently violent world. Defence budgets will rise, counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism action will come centre stage, bases will be maintained in 'regions of potential threat' and long-range force projection will be enhanced. There will be little deference to international law or multilateral agreements, and root causes of violence will be largely ignored.

Given the international trends towards greater divisions, and the increasing frustrations of a marginalised majority, this will most probably lead to the development of more radical and extreme social movements, leading to further events, possibly much more devastating than the massacres of 11 September. These, in turn, are likely to lead to a redoubling of efforts to maintain control, a never-ending war indeed.

Such a state of conflict would be especially costly to the United States, as it would experience the greatest future risk of paramilitary action, including future mass casualty attacks against its own citizens. This makes it important that those with the genuine interests of the United States at heart should recognise the need to embrace new thinking and move beyond the current security paradigm.

The other possibility is that the trauma of 11 September encourages individuals, citizen groups, intellectuals and indeed political leaders to recognise the long term security significance of what happened and to re-double efforts to move to a more equitable and stable world. This should not be dismissed as idealism; there are indeed many signs of this happening. One of the more hopeful features since 11 September, understandably much more common outside of the United States, has been a concern to address root causes of political violence as well as concentrating on controlling its symptoms.

What is clear is that there are profound differences in perception. There are those in the United States and elsewhere who regard it as essential to maintain control – not just as a result of the terrible experience of 11 September but because of a wider perception of the need to respond militarily to an unstable and volatile world. There are others, some in Europe and many more in the majority world, who see such efforts as deeply flawed and almost certain to increase the levels of conflict and violence. Whether these latter voices can make themselves heard will largely determine whether we enter a period of continuous conflict or are able to respond with more creative paths to stability, justice and peace.

In the final analysis, it is a matter of choice, and the next decade is likely to prove pivotal in determining the degree of international instability that could prevail for much of the new century. The early effects of 11 September suggest a hardening of the old paradigm, but there is every chance that it may become possible to further analyse and demonstrate the futility of that approach. The responsibility for those in a position to do so, whether activists, academics, politicians, officials or many others, is considerable.

## End Notes

1. This is not discussed in detail in this paper. For a more detailed consideration see a previous paper in this series: Paul Rogers and Scilla Elworthy, *The United States, Europe and the Majority World after 11 September* (Oxford Research Group Briefing Paper, October 2001, Oxford).
2. *'My enemy's enemy is not always my friend'*, Hakluyt, New Year 2002.
3. Walter Pincus, 'Al Qaeda to survive bin Laden, Panel told', *Washington Post*, 19 December 2001.
4. George J. Tenet, 'Worldwide Threat: Converging Dangers in a Post 9/11 World.' *Testimony of the Director of Central Intelligence before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*, 6 February, 2002.
5. Ibid.
6. Other recent examples include: is the assassination on Jan 22, 2002 by Indonesian army troops of Abdullah Syafii, military commander of the Free Aceh Movement, which demands independence for Aceh, a region in northwest Sumatra. It has been in opposition to Exxon Mobil, which has extensive drilling and refining operations in the territory. In Nigeria, on 23 December 2001 Chief Bola Ige, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General was murdered in his home by unknown gunmen. Ige was a political leader supporting southern Nigerian groups opposed to the activities of oil companies in the region. (Wayne Masden, 31 January 2002)
7. The publications of a significant interest group, *The Project on the New American Century*, are relevant here <<http://www.geocities.com/newamericancentury/>>. For a more general analysis of the western security paradigm, see: Paul Rogers, *Losing Control: Global Security in the 21st Century* (Pluto Press, 2nd edition, June 2002).
8. Article 5 states that an attack on one member of NATO is an attack on all.
9. Air Marshal Sir Timothy Garden at Royal Institute for International Affairs annual conference; 'Europe and America A New Strategic Partnership', 18<sup>th</sup> February 2002.
10. General Klaus Naumann, former Chair, NATO Military Committee at Royal Institute for International Affairs annual conference; 'Europe and America A New Strategic Partnership', 18<sup>th</sup> February 2002.
11. 'Autumn 2001: A Watershed in North-South Relations?', *South Letter*, Volumes 3 and 4, 2001, The South Centre, Geneva.
12. *New South African Outlook*, November 2001.
13. Paul Ingram and Ian Davis, *The Subsidy Trap: British Government Financial Support for Arms Exports* (Oxford Research Group/Saferworld, 2001) identifies subsidies to UK arms exports of £420 million per annum, or £4,600 per job.

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