

GLOBALIZATION AT WAR: WAR ON TERRORISM

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Abstract

Since 9/11 public attention has shifted from “globalization” to the war on terrorism. This raises the question what agendas shape the ongoing war on terrorism and how it affects contemporary globalization. This discussion opens with a brief review of current perspectives on globalization to serve as a yardstick to measure ongoing changes. The next section interprets 9/11 as the “globalization of the globalizer”. Turning to the war on terrorism I argue that it should be understood in terms of long-term objectives of the United States and involves underlying contradictions. Further sections consider US foreign policy in conjunction with macroeconomic policy and neoliberalism, and the implications of 9/11 for globalization-from-below movements. The closing section considers the dynamics shaping globalization.

Introduction

9/11 tends to invite ad hoc reflection but raises questions about the shape of contemporary globalization. Since 9/11 public attention has shifted from “globalization” to the war on terrorism. The wider question is what agendas shape the ongoing war on terrorism and how does it inflect contemporary globalization. This discussion opens with a brief inventory of current perspectives on globalization to serve as a yardstick to measure contemporary globalization. The next section interprets 9/11 as the “globalization of the globalizer”. Turning to the war on terrorism I argue that it should be understood in terms of long-term objectives of the United States and involves underlying contradictions. Further sections consider US foreign policy in conjunction with macroeconomic policy and neoliberalism and the implications of 9/11 for globalization-from-below movements. The closing section considers the dynamics shaping globalization.

Globalization

At the turn of the millennium an emerging consensus on at least some features of globalization holds that globalization is being shaped by technological changes and major corporations, is uneven, involves the reconfiguration of states and goes together with regionalization.

Information and communications technologies are part of the infrastructure of globalization in finance, capital mobility and transnational business. Major changes in the international economic landscape are intertwined; contemporary accelerated globalization is in effect a package deal that includes informatization (applications of information technology), flexibilization (changes in production and labour associated with post-Fordism), financialization (the growing importance of financial instruments and services) and deregulation or liberalization (unleashing market forces). This package effect contributes to the dramatic character of the changes associated with globalization, which serves as their shorthand description. Since “globalization” per se refers to a spatial process, i.e. world scale effects (precisely of what is not determined), the term itself is inadequate but serves as a flag word signaling wider changes.

From the nineteenth century the *form* of globalization was the growing predominance of nation states (Robertson, 1992). While between 1840 and 1960, nation states were the leading format of political organization worldwide, since the 1960s regional integration has entered into the picture as an increasingly significant dynamic. From the mid-twentieth century state authority has been leaking upwards, in international and supranational forms of pooling sovereignty, and downwards. If the latter happens in a controlled fashion it is referred to as decentralization; if it occurs in an uncontrolled fashion it is termed ethnic or regional conflict, resulting in fragmentation and possibly state disintegration.

A familiar account of the implications of globalization is the erosion of boundaries and the growth of crossborder activities, economic and otherwise. For instance, “A critical issue raised by globalization is the lack of meaning of geographically rooted jurisdiction when markets are constructed in electronic space” (Kobrin, 1998: 362). The “internationalization of the state,” another common notion, refers to the blurring of boundaries between international and domestic politics (producing “intermestic” politics).

While earlier analyses argued the retreat of states (Strange, 1996), the onset of a borderless world (Ohmae, 1992), the end of the nation state and formation of the region state (Ohmae, 1995), these arguments have been superseded by more nuanced views (e.g. Boyer and Drache, 1996; Mann, 1997), according to which states may now be leaner but also more active and in some areas assume greater responsibilities (Griffin and Khan, 1992). Perhaps what consensus exists may be formulated in the twin processes of a general trend towards the pooling of sovereignty at different levels (regional, international, supranational) in combination with an incomplete shift from government to

multi-scalar governance, from local and municipal, national and regional, all the way to supranational levels.

Presently the leading political form of globalization is regionalization, ranging from customs unions, free market zones and regional security alliances to the deep institutionalization of the European Union (EU). For example, a spatial-political perspective is to view regional formations as anchors around which peripheries align—with Japan and China as centres in East and Southeast Asia; North America and Latin America; and the EU and Eastern Europe, the Southern Mediterranean and Africa. A temporal perspective is to view regional integration as a stepping stone towards growing multilateralism and eventually global governance.

Contemporary globalization is largely concentrated in the Triad of North America, Europe and East Asia. Income and wealth are extremely and increasingly unequal in distribution: 14 percent of the world's population accounted for 80 percent of investment flows in the period 1980-91 and for 70 percent of world trade in 1992 (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). The ratio of income of the top 20 percent of the world population to the income of the bottom 20 percent has jumped from 30:1 in 1960 to 78:1 in 1994. The personal assets of 385 billionaires in the world now exceed the annual income of countries representing 45 percent of the world population (Castells, 1999). This is captured under headings such as “Triadization”, “selective globalization” or “truncated globalization”, confined to the “interlinked economies”.

While this prompts the idea that the “Third World” is being left out or excluded from globalization, this would overlook the many ways in which countries in the South are being affected by global dynamics. Rather than describing these relations as exclusion they are more accurately described as asymmetric inclusion or hierarchical integration (Nederveen Pieterse, 1997 and 2000). While during the past decades the development gap between advanced economies and newly industrialized countries has narrowed, the gap between these and the least developed countries has been widening. Paraphrasing the terminology of uneven development, the present situation may be referred to as combined and uneven globalization.

Another common understanding, that globalization means time-space compression, refers to more intensive interaction across wider space and in shorter time than before, in other words the experience of a shrinking world.

There is plenty of controversy as to what some of these features mean, so it's not easy to draw a line between the consensus and the controversies over globalization. Overall, globalization invites more controversy than consensus and areas of consensus are narrow by comparison to the controversies. While it is widely assumed that globalization is fundamentally multidimensional (as in its cultural implications) economics is usually presented as the driving force. Another dispute concerns globalization and capitalism: does globalization coincide with neoliberalism or is neoliberalism merely the current *form* of globalization? How one answers this follows

from one's assessment of the timing of globalization and whether it is a recent or long-term historical process.

Globalization crosses boundaries of general, government, business, cultural and academic interest; it is politically and theoretically challenging. Politically it crosses the ideological spectrum and challenges social movements and local, national and international politics. Theoretically, it involves a paradigm shift from the era of nation states and international politics to global politics.

The Globalizer Globalized

Major historical events, like existential and political prisms and mirrors, reveal our preoccupations. Like in a mirror everyone views 9/11 through one's own lenses. As a "politique du spectacle" of almost apocalyptic proportions 9/11 reverberates on many levels—as an emotional shock that raises levels of anxiety and alertness, a signal that arouses deep thought and reflection about the world we live in and that is translated into action along various lines. In the United States 911 is the national alarm number. In the Islamic world a key date is 10/7, when the bombing of Afghanistan began. All is in the eye of the beholder. A terrorism expert thinks of methods of terrorism. Others ponder misdeeds of the United States.

In the United States, 9/11 has been experienced as a major crisis. Considered by planetary standards it may be reasonable to ask what crisis? Attacks that take many innocent lives, that have economic, political and cultural spillover effects is what many peoples have been experiencing for decades. For countries such as Sudan and Afghanistan crisis has been chronic and a permanent condition. Now the United States which has so often inflicted crisis, experiences crisis. The globalizer globalized.

9/11 shattered the illusion of the United States as a separate reality of peace and prosperity. Third World diseases such as TB are now found in New York and the West Nile virus has been signaled across the country (Sassen, 2001). Goods and resources from all parts of the world reach the United States and so do illegal immigrants and human trafficking. Strategic or selective globalization, which is so troublesome to achieve for many countries, turns out to be a difficult undertaking for the United States as well. The idea that the United States can have globalization the American way, tapping energy sources and cheap labour the world over without sharing the burden is no more.

Global reach used to refer to multinational corporations. However, "If economics could be globalized, why not political violence? The two are in fact connected" (Ferguson, 2001: 78). Global reach turns out to be a two-way street. Congo never attacked Belgium, but now for the first time, notes Chomsky (2002), the guns point the other way. Is this so novel? During the Algerian war, Algerians undertook attacks in France; the IRA hit targets in England; the PKK attacked Turkish targets in Germany. Many European countries have experienced attacks of various kinds; yet this is the first

time that the United States has been successfully attacked on its own soil, so in a perverse way the world is one as never before. “September 11 shrunk the distance between the world that benefits from globalisation and the world that has been left behind” (Ignatieff, 2001: 13).

The globalization divide—between rich folks and poor folks—used to match a conflict divide. The US defense system conventionally distinguishes between C level security threats or minor conflicts, B level threats to the “national interest” and A level threats to national survival. Asymmetric conflict between unequal parties and across technology gaps used to mean Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda (Nederveen Pieterse, 2002a); 9/11 has suddenly stretched the spectrum of asymmetric conflict all the way to A level.

Some counsel that 9/11 calls for a security response and for global democratization, including economic democracy between North and South—a forward-looking reaction that looks past the paranoia of the moment. The dark scenario is that this episode yields a cycle of deepening violence and militarization, a sliding slope of risk and retaliation, and inaugurating a new imperial episode. A light scenario is that this highlights the need for a global conversation and serious engagement with world problems.

However, the media through which, in part, this conversation should be conducted have long been underperforming. Mainstream media in the US have under-reported the globalization divide, the nature of American policies overseas and reactions to American policies, as well as dissent within the US. In the wake of 9/11, a monotony of patriotic correctness suddenly swept through the media and academia. In the US, “You will find more opinion pieces on airport x-ray machines and new check-in procedures than about global injustice” (Freedland 2001: 14). By legitimating policies while recycling stereotypes the media intoned a collective Stepford effect.

We are all part of the theatre of war considering that contemporary warfare includes the use of media. Much information that reaches the public may be understood as part of a knowledge-intensive military strategy, which is technically termed Integrated Information Operations. In Operation Desert Storm and the Allied Force Operation in Kosovo media manipulation was a crucial component of strategy, and warfare was conducted as a multilevel spin doctoring operation. According to a strategy analyst, “The essence of Information Warfare and Information Operations is that the aim of conflict should be to manage the perceptions of an enemy leadership. ... An integrated IO strategy would therefore incorporate covert action, public affairs and propaganda, diplomacy and economic warfare” (Rathmell, 1998: 290). This approach applies to international and domestic arenas. For the US to win the war at the narrative level (“hearts and minds”), one plea, phrased in double-speak, is now for “an ‘information strategy’ complete with truth-seeking teams of ‘special media forces’” (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001a: 18).

9/11 and Media

The usual sequence is first the facts, then judgment. In relation to 9/11 two sets of data are available: mainstream media, which have suffered from patriotic correctness, and alternative sources such as internet, which are uncorroborated and speculative but raise key questions.

There are many anomalies in the standard accounts. Many intelligence warnings were ignored. Anomalous dealings in stocks of United Airlines and American Airlines days before 9/11 are odd as well. So is the circumstance that according to a French analysis of US armed forces photographs after the explosion there is no plane to be seen at the Pentagon (see http://www.asile.org/citoyens/numero13/pentagone/erreurs_en.htm). These oddities could point in various directions. Most odd is that no intercept of the civilian aircraft that strayed off course by military aircraft took place, although that is a standard procedure that normally takes place within minutes. That this routine procedure would not have worked in one or two instances can happen, but it did not occur either in relation to two further aircraft that swerved off course almost an hour later (a detailed discussion is in Ahmed, 2002). Stranger still is that no pressing questions have been raised about this in the mainstream media.

In the fog of war all is twilight. How can we assess 9/11 without full disclosure? Adequate evidence of Bin Laden's involvement in 9/11 has not been provided; the US government's promised white paper was never published. Neither is there certainty whether Al Qaeda is of real significance (when I was visiting Peshawar and the Afghan border in spring 2002 it was jokingly referred to as "phantom Al Qaeda"). Where evidence does appear to exist, it is not, or only belatedly, being disclosed. For instance, while it is argued that the anthrax scare of fall 2001 originated from an American military laboratory, allegedly known with precision in the security community (Monbiot, 2002), we lack full disclosure on this issue as well.

In November 2001 a confidential memo leaked from the chair of CNN, Samuel Isaacson, directed to CNN correspondents to the effect that given the death toll of 9/11 it would be perverse to highlight civilian casualties in Afghanistan; if reported they should be mentioned along with reiterating the casualties of 9/11 (www.fair.org). In effect the world's most influential news medium served as a war trumpet. We don't really know what is going on in war theatres since most information comes from or via the Pentagon.

Information Coordination Centers were set up in New York, London and Islamabad to neutralize and deflect news of civilian casualties and other unfavourable reporting on a 24-hour basis. In October 2001 the Pentagon sought advice from Hollywood and hired "A well-known Washington public relations firm [the Rendon Group] to help it explain US military strikes in Afghanistan to global audiences" (Strobel and Landay 2001: A8). While the Pentagon Office of Strategic Influence did not have a long career, who knows what share of US foreign policy reporting now consists of black ops (disinformation intelligence operations) or marketing exercises.

Beyond Blowback

A standard account of 9/11 refers to blowback. In a nutshell, this reiterates how during the Afghanistan war the United States and allies supported conservative religious organizations as a counterweight in the fight against communism. The US supported the Mujahideen in Afghanistan the way Israel sponsored Hamas in the Occupied Territories, as a counterweight to leftwing Palestinian groups. The Bin Laden phenomenon, then, is an outgrowth of previous anti-Soviet policies (Bodansky, 2001; Orbach, 2001). Since it is also an extension of Saudi oil wealth, part of the wider backdrop is US Middle East policy. For decades the US and other countries relied on oil supplies from the Middle East while sustaining oligarchies. The US poured oil revenues into the region while alienating it politically, particularly through its virtually unconditional support of Israel: a policy of politically alienating while economically strengthening a strategic region. During the cold war this imbalance was compensated for by the struggle against communism; the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia and other countries conducted joint operations from Afghanistan to Zaire. Saudi Arabia as part of its own balancing act supported both anti-communism and conservative Islamic movements. When the cold war unraveled so did the alliance. The Mujahideen in Afghanistan funded, armed and trained by the US and Pakistan, turned to other targets. Returnees from the Afghan front became armed Islamic militants in Egypt, Algeria, the Philippines, Bosnia and Kashmir. Meanwhile the Gulf War brought US military bases into Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Gulf Emirates.

The close ties between American and Saudi elites are well on record--including relations between the Bush and Bin Laden families. A brother of Osama Bin Laden invested in Arbusta (a small oil company set up by George W. Bush) and later in the Carlyle Group (the eleventh largest defense contractor in the US) on whose board is George Bush Sr. (Ahmed, 2002).

The implication of blowback, originally a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) term, is unwanted consequences of past security operations (for a broad account see Johnson, 2000). While this implies admission of past involvement, on the other hand, it disavows responsibility and takes politics out of ongoing events by treating them as merely unanticipated consequences of past actions. Is this an accurate account of ongoing dynamics?

The same organizations that the United States promoted in the eighties were declared to be the new enemy in the nineties, renamed fundamentalist, with the "clash of civilizations" serving as a new enemy doctrine. Yesterday's freedom fighter became today's terrorist. The "clash of civilizations" formula is not merely primordialism warned over but diverts attention from the role of politics in the equation: yesterday's allies were created and then recast as today's enemies.

In Afghanistan, the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia supported the Taliban, helped them come to power, and kept them in power by demobilizing their rivals such as the Northern Alliance as late as 1998 (Ahmed, 2002). Central Asia emerged as another

strategic backdrop and geopolitical pivot, amply discussed (Brzezinski, 1997). In 1998 Dick Cheney told the oil industry, "I cannot think of a time when we had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian" (Pilger, 2001: 14-15). Taliban leaders were flown to Washington and Texas by then president Bush Sr. and Unocal. At the time a US official stated that "with the Caspian's oil flowing, Afghanistan would become "like Saudi Arabia", an oil colony with no democracy and legal persecution of women... and we can live with that" (Pilger, 2001: 14-15).

From 1995 on the US and Unocal talked to the Taliban government about oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia through Afghanistan, as reported in Congressional hearings of 1998 and 2001 (Ahmed, 2002). According to the Unocal negotiator based in Islamabad, by mid-August 2001 talks were advanced to the point that a draft contract was ready to be signed. Sometime in August the Taliban changed course and opted to work with Petronas of Malaysia and an Argentinean oil company instead. The breakdown of talks in August brought into effect the military option. That US military operations in Afghanistan were planned to take place in mid-October was well known in policy circles in Pakistan and India in summer 2001.

Needed then, between August and October, was a trigger to provide justification for an attack on Afghanistan. This raises the question whether sections of the US government had foreknowledge of the 9/11 attack; this is an open question that in the absence of a full inquiry cannot be addressed. It may take years for the truth to come out, like with the Gulf of Tonkin.

War on Terrorism

That the war on terrorism is an unlikely kind of war has been widely observed. The post-cold war weaknesses of US national security and intelligence are well on record (Eisendrath, 2000). Launching unmanned missiles at distant targets vaguely defined as "the infrastructure of terrorism", as was done since 1998, is neither an effective military strategy nor a credible deterrent against further criminal acts. Unlike the cold war, the war on terrorism is open-ended. While the war on terrorism is widely scorned as simplistic, it is worth considering what purposes this multi-pronged and open-ended project serves—political, geopolitical, military and military-industrial.

The war on terrorism fulfills certain purposes better than the war on drugs. Perceptions of threat, security buildup, expansion of the military budget, and projection of American military presence overseas were all in place already, consider for instance the \$1.3 billion Plan Colombia. The reactions to 9/11, then, reinforce an existing pattern; 9/11 has been a godsend to the hawks. A new component is the narrowing of the spectrum of American debate and the curtailment of domestic dissent.

The American leadership responded to 9/11 with remarkable dispatch, launching a brand new war on terrorism and obtaining broad Congressional support within weeks.

The basic parameters of the “new kind of war” were set in a matter of days; in the words of defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld (2001: 21): “Forget about ‘exit strategies’; we’re looking at a sustained engagement that carries no deadlines”. This marks a clear break with the post-Vietnam principle of avoiding long-term military engagements overseas.

The widely ridiculed “axis of evil” in fact refers to three regions of major geostrategic concern to the United States. Brzezinski (1997: xiv) notes that “he who controls Eurasia controls the world” and offers a virtual blueprint of American geopolitical objectives. He identifies pivotal areas that include Iran, to secure access to Central Asia; Iraq, to secure a presence in the Middle East and the Gulf; and North Korea, to keep Japan within the circle of military influence. An alternative interpretation, held in China, is that the objective is to contain China (Harris, 2002).

The war on terrorism comes with a vast, unprecedented increase in the US military budget. The increase of \$48 billion for the fiscal year 2003 equals the entire military budget of Japan. It brings military spending for 2003 to a total of three hundred eighty billion US dollars, which exceeds the combined military spending of the next 15-20 largest military spenders. “The US intelligence community’s roughly \$30 billion budget is already greater than the national defense budgets of all but six countries in the world” (Hoffman, 2001: 20). This budget exceeds cold war US military spending by more than 15%. These gargantuan magnitudes must be juxtaposed to cutbacks in already low federal spending on infrastructure, education and social services.

Already Afghanistan is being enthusiastically advertised as a laboratory for testing weaponry, like the Gulf was previously. New equipment—“smarter bombs, more sensitive surveillance systems and more sophisticated communication networks”—is to “supply the troops with better information, precision and speed” (Feder, 2001: 6). The war on terrorism coincides with a programme of “force transformation” centred on rebuilding the American military around information technology and phasing out big weapon systems; this is variously described as modernization towards a capabilities-based, entrepreneurial approach (Rumsfeld, 2002) and “a revolution in warfare” (Dao and Revkin, 2002: 1).

Previously a tension existed between the Clinton/Gore “globalists” favouring broad aims of nation building overseas and “positive ends”, and the “hegemonists” of the Bush campaign focusing on narrowly defined vital interests and Powell’s “preventive defense” (Harris, 2002). The war on terrorism bridges these objectives and thus creates a bipartisan framework of consensus.

The Bush administration has adopted an aggressive unilateralism (“if you are not with us you are against us”), largely bypassing international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and UN Security Council. In November 2001 Dick Cheney warned that the United States could take action against 40 to 50 countries, with Somalia and Iraq then top of the list. The Nuclear Posture Review of Congress released in early 2002 adds preemptive nuclear strikes to the arsenal of deterrence. In late spring 2002 the Bush

administration has formally taken the war to an offensive stage by announcing preemptive strikes; by summer the target was narrowed down to Iraq.

Forks in the Road

The war on terrorism raises short term and long term problems and problems that are internal and external to the United States.

A short-term problem is that Israel's invasion of the West Bank stole the thunder from the American war on terrorism. Israel's war on terrorism took the form of a reoccupation and devastation of a defenseless people who had been occupied for 35 years already, in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions and international law during most of this time. The overt rationale of Israel's invasion of Palestine is clearly absurd: destroy the "terrorist infrastructure" while "suicide bombs" are a low-tech weapon of despair; destroy the Palestinian security forces while urging them to contain terrorism; and devastate the civilian infrastructure under the pretext of defence against terror. The implications are absurd: Palestinian infrastructures have been largely funded by the EU, US and international agencies and have been destroyed with American weapons and blessings. While the whole world has been watching, the political and emotional nexus between 9/11 and the war on terrorism has been replaced by another nexus: the war on terrorism and Jenin. "War on terrorism" now means wanton destruction and war crimes. The bravery of Palestinians may add up to this: that after Jenin the US war on terrorism has been derailed for the time being and its legitimacy has evaporated.

The attempts to bring Iraq back into the picture (funding families of suicide bombers in Palestine and supplying the "terrorist infrastructure") and thus linking the US and Israeli war on terrorism backfired by placing them on the same moral footing, in a frame of international war crimes. Attempts to bring Iraq's weapons of mass destruction back into the picture appear thin, also considering that they had been supplied by the United States in the first place during Iraq's war against Iran.

The resemblance between US and Israeli policies is not occasional. American conduct in the wake of 9/11 resembles on a world scale the way Israel has been behaving on a regional scale, along with a siege mentality, an obsession with security and a garrison state that curtails civil liberties and is short on dissent. Both share a Goliath complex in relying almost exclusively on force as a solution to their perceived problems; this leads to the suspicion that some problems may be manufactured to justify a war policy and machinery that has become an end in itself.

That different factions in American military circles endorse divergent strategic principles in reaction to the threat of terrorism presents another kind of problem. "Overwhelming Force", the strategic doctrine followed by General Colin Powell as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Operation Desert Storm, has been applied again in Afghanistan as the doctrine informing the use of US military capabilities. This

approach matches the Nazi Blitzkrieg, the swift application of full military means to achieve rapid victory. Proportionate violence is one of the principles underlying just war; Overwhelming Force or unrestrained force is far removed from proportionate. Current American military doctrine frequently refers to the Blitzkrieg as a shining example for the modernization of the US military (Rumsfeld, 2002). This type of approach privileges hierarchical centralized command.

RAND analysts advocate a strategy of “netwar”, or “fight networks with networks”. This analysis argues that Al Qaeda “holds advantages at the organizational, doctrinal and social levels” (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001a: 18-19). In this view, at the organizational level, the confrontation with networked/ nonstate actors is a challenge to achieve deep, selective, all-channel networking among the military, law enforcement, and intelligence elements on the American side. On the level of doctrine, the method of “swarming” attributed to the opponent (“a campaign of episodic, pulsing attacks by various nodes of the network at locations sprawled across global space and time”) requires a “whole new doctrine based on small-unit swarming... emphasizing special forces and limited air power” (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001a: 18-19; Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001b). This approach follows the American tradition of low intensity conflict and privileges decentralized command.

Underlying the tension between centralized and decentralized command is an overall contradiction between structures of hierarchy and dynamics of modernization. One response to 9/11 is to bring back Big Government by expanding the Pentagon budget and establishing a new Department of Homeland Security, a vast new bureaucracy with expanded powers of domestic policing and surveillance (which aggravates rather than alleviates the existing problem of bureaucracy in the security community). Another response relies on information technology to manage security risk, which requires flexibility and all-channel connectivity and networking to be effective. Here technology functions as a “silver bullet” approach to security risk. The hierarchical command structure, however, is out of synch with knowledge-intensive force transformation, a problem that also beset earlier attempts to modernize the US armed forces.

US policies and their ramifications for allies and foes raise further problems from the point of view legality and security. The new policy of preemptive strikes “could amount to ultimate unilateralism, because it reserves the right to determine what constitutes a threat to American security and to act even if that threat is judged imminent” (Sanger, 2002: A1, A6). Based, essentially, on the threat of weapons of mass destruction, which is in turn based on classified information, the rationale for war is unaccountable; it is the preserve of closed-door committees releasing allegations. Any unruly country or government can be targeted. The allegation of harbouring or assisting terrorism, possessing or manufacturing weapons of mass destruction is of a type that only intelligence agencies can monitor and assess. Meanwhile, the investigator, rapporteur, prosecutor, judge and executioner are a single entity. While the talk is of a “common security policy”, in matters like this there are no independent sources of information.

The key question is whether the reactions to 9/11 should follow a war paradigm or a law enforcement paradigm. International terrorism is a crime and a matter of law enforcement, not military operations (a pointed argument is Boyle, 2002). A country seeking extradition of a criminal must produce evidence. As to sponsorship of terrorism, in reaction to IRA bombs in London, as Chomsky (2002) asks, did Britain bomb Belfast and Boston? The definition of terrorism is contentious. Where would South Africa and the ANC be now if terrorism had been defined then the way it is now? Terrorism bills in the US and United Kingdom (UK), the curtailment of civil liberties, suppression of dissent, illegal detention of suspects of Middle Eastern descent in the US and secret military tribunals for terrorism suspects, compound the situation.

International law is a major avenue toward stabilizing international affairs. In brief, without legality, there is no legitimacy; and without legitimacy, there is no security. Hence weakening international legality means weakening security.

The war on terrorism gives governments a green light to use violent means to suppress crossborder and domestic challenges. The attractions of this paradigm do not go unnoticed by other governments. Israel, Russia (Chechnya), India (Kashmir), China (Xingjian), the Philippines (Basilan), Yemen, Nepal (Maoist rebellion), Indonesia (Aceh, Maluku) are joining the bandwagon, and others may yet follow such as Turkey, Sri Lanka (Tamil Elam) or Senegal. The policy of preemptive strikes may raise the stakes further: "Israel could use it to justify harder strikes into Palestinian territory; India could use it to preempt any Pakistani nuclear capability; China could use it justify an attack on Taiwan" (Sanger, 2002: A1, A6). It may also prompt preemptive strikes by opponents.

This may open the door to widening international anarchism. While actual US policy is one of temporary plug-in plug-out alliances (Nederveen Pieterse, 2002a), the official US response is to formulate a common security policy for the great powers—Europe, Russia, China, Japan (Sanger, 2002). But each of these envisions different threats and opportunities, and the policy of "ultimate unilateralism" undermines the very political and legal basis that the United States seeks to fashion.

If the war against terrorism extends to Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and other countries a coalition may not hold. Already the Beirut proposal of Saudi and other Arab countries for peace in the region has drawn a line against US intervention in Iraq. Legality is a sensitive point in coalition politics too. European countries may not extradite terrorist suspects to the United States because of the US death penalty.

Other central concerns are US Middle East policy and macroeconomic policy. According to an American view, "The United States has a severe image problem in the Muslim world" (Thomson, 2001: 13). This displaces the problem of American policies to a question of perceptions. Note the question of a young Pakistani: "How come Americans are so good at selling Coke and McDonald's to people all over the world, but can't sell their policies? 'Because their policies are poisonous and their Coke is sweet', said Moulana Samiul Haq" (Friedman, 2001: 17). Nothing short of a change in policies, then,

will change this situation; yet US support for Israel is deeply anchored in American domestic politics.

Neoliberalism

“The terrorist attacks on America were the Chernobyl of globalization”, according to the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2001). “Suddenly, the seemingly irrefutable tenets of neoliberalism—that economics will supersede politics, that the role of the state will diminish—lose their force in a world of global risks. ... America’s vulnerability is indeed much related to its political philosophy. ... Neoliberalism has always been a fair-weather philosophy, one that works only when there are no serious conflicts and crises” (Beck, 2001).

The Canadian journalist Naomi Klein (2001: 23) makes a similar point: “In this ‘new kind of war’, it becomes clear that terrorists are finding their weapons in our tattered public infrastructures. This is true not only in rich countries such as the US, but also in poor countries... The extreme Islamic seminaries in Pakistan that indoctrinated so many Taliban leaders thrive precisely because they fill a huge social welfare gap...”

Interpreting Islamist influence as a stopgap for privatization may apply to Egypt but not to Sudan or the madrasas in Pakistan where Islamic influence reflects wider dynamics. While neoliberal globalization means a weak public sector and “cheap government”, in some respects states have been strong all along--in implementing IMF conditionalities and structural adjustment programmes, imposing spending cutbacks and suppressing popular resistance, and in security and defence. But they have been weak in domestic economic policy and in contending with multinational corporations. With the turn to war, states again take the front seat; Big Government is back also in the US.

9/11 has shaken the “animal spirits” of late capitalism. Once consumer confidence fades an economy driven by replacement demand and consumer spending on status goods, kept going by marketing mood-making, comes tumbling down like a house of cards. “Hundreds of thousands of jobs disappear in a month. Confidence—and stock market gains—evaporate in a blink. Companies whose strategies appeared brilliant are exposed as overreaching, or even fraudulent, the moment times get tough” (Stevenson, 2001: 3). Aviation, tourism, retail, stocks, banks, energy, accounting, telecommunications, insurance, advertising, Hollywood, fashion, media, even masculinity and theology—all sectors have been trembling and repositioning under the impact of 9/11 which is what American media have been continuously reporting on. Global capitalism turns out to be as interconnected as network analysis has suggested and as vulnerable. In this war, Americans have been urged to go shopping. On the whole, the economic impact of 9/11 has been only temporary, with the exception of insurance rates; the economic impact of the Enron episode and the cascade of corporate scandals turns out to be much more significant.

Still there is glaring inconsistency between federal government support for sectors hit by the 9/11 crisis—especially airlines and insurance (which incurred a \$50 billion loss)—and the Washington consensus which has been urging all governments, crisis or not, to liberalize economies and cutback spending. If the insurance industry would not receive government support rates will increase, delaying economic recovery. Countries that have been lectured by Washington and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on economic sanity are surprised to learn that the US does not follow its own counsel. This may have lasting ripple effects, showing up the shallowness of neoliberal policy. That neoliberalism is crisis-prone rather than crisis-proof is no news in most of the world (Asia, Latin America, Africa and Russia) but a novel experience for the US.

During the Vietnam War, the US budget squeeze between Johnson's Great Society and the war effort led to a major slump; now a deficit economy faces a budget squeeze between huge tax cuts and a vast expansion of military spending. In a globally-wired economy with a large service sector and a failing "new economy", a transition to a war economy is not as easily achieved nor as rewarding as during the cold war era.

The opportunism of the present US administration in macroeconomic policy does not help in bringing about a new international coalition. Proclaiming free trade while imposing steel tariffs and adopting a farm bill with huge subsidies to American farms demonstrates that the United States favours free trade only if it does not damage its interests. This is nothing new, but the signal is louder than before and it clashes with Washington's agenda in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

9/11 and Globalization from Below

In media coverage "anti-globalization" now takes a backseat behind security concerns. Control of the public agenda is one of the effects of war and also the war on terrorism. The impact on globalization-from-below movements is minor for their agenda remains essentially unchanged, but it does affect the *representation* of globalization from below. This holds implications for tactics, strategy and methods of action.

Increasing security concerns in summit meetings rule out another "battle of Seattle". Secure and remote locations for new WTO, Group of Eight (G8) and other meetings represent a novel pattern, which is symbolic for a new phase of globalization. Meetings such as the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum now take place in locations wide apart (such as New York or Davos and Porto Alegre in Brazil, respectively). Violent methods of direct action are now no go. Within globalization-from-below movements this means a marginalization or retreat of the anarchist black bloc. Within the movements this helps the shift from protest to proposition that had been in motion already. The French initiative ATTAC, for instance, campaigns for the implementation of the Tobin tax.

There is no significant change in the issues facing globalization-from-below movements. Their major agendas remain unchanged—such as the critique of the IMF, World Bank and WTO, the aims of social development, democratization and anti-racism. The war on terrorism makes no difference in relation to these agendas, but some additional agendas emerge: with human rights now comes the question of civil liberties. The nexus between development and security acquires a new salience. Regional flash points such as the Middle East, Kashmir and Central Asia come to the foreground. These concerns bring back earlier connections between humanitarian intervention and development (or relief and development), between the peace movement and solidarity with the South (deadly connections), and between justice and peace (long proclaimed in liberation theology).

Globalization Before and After

Contemporary globalization is still being shaped by technological changes, involves corporations as major players, is uneven, involves the reconfiguration of states and goes together with regionalization. But globalization before and after 9/11 and the war on terrorism is marked by two major differences from which other differences follow. First, the United States now displays an aggressive unilateralism that marks a shift from a mixed international system of uni-multipolarity to unipolarity (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2002; Nederveen Pieterse, 2002b). Second, if before 9/11 matters of security were background issues in globalization, involving conflict management in the global margins (“humanitarian intervention”), or geopolitics that rarely figured on the front pages, now American homeland defence and an offensive war mode define the overall terrain. From globalization centred primarily on economic dynamics (international trade, finance, development) globalization now centres on security and geopolitics, and the whole world has become a potential battleground. If globalization before was primarily economic in character, now it is primarily state-driven. If previously lean government was the keynote, now big government is back.

9/11 and its aftermath shows how the faces of contemporary globalization are completely out of synch. What are at issue, among other things, are corporate entanglements (oil and gas), geopolitical aspirations (Central Asia and the Gulf), blowback, political zigzags and opportunism (US-Taliban), military ambitions, partial information or disinformation (media) as well as a host of factional, national and regional interests. Any adequate representation of contemporary globalization would take, for starters, the skills of post-cubist painting.

Besides international law, another major concern in stabilizing the international situation is greater economic equity and global democratization. Contemporary globalization is fundamentally hierarchical and unequal. As many comments point out, “The essential problem is that the victors of the cold war now run a global world order

that has no perceived legitimacy among billions of human beings, especially those in the Islamic world” (Ignatieff, 2001: 13). Or, “the campaign against terrorism has reminded Americans that our security depends on ensuring that other countries have a stake in the international system—which is possible only if the wealthy nations lower their trade barriers” (Brainard, 2001: 19). This calls for equitable international trade, democratization of international institutions, and so forth.

US policy circles view doing away with extreme poverty and oppression that feed the political cultures of terrorism as a pragmatic option, which is casually referred to as “draining the swamp”. This is not a matter of compassion but of global risk management through social engineering, that is, a matter of drainage. A moderate undercurrent in US foreign policy looks to poverty alleviation and economic development as part of a preemptive security policy. But the \$5 billion over three years allocated by the Bush administration in Monterrey for this purpose pale next to the \$48 billion extra for the military for the 2003 budget. American unilateralism and bypassing international institutions in the war on terrorism do not point in this direction either. Besides, mere gestures at poverty reduction do not alter the perception of plain injustice: US policies particularly in the Middle East are widely perceived as biased and unjust.

The open-ended war on terrorism is a formula both for imperial projection and imperial overstretch. Many accounts refer to the risks of overextension—for instance, “Too broad a war could just create new foes” (Cannistraro, 2002). The American leadership has seized the moment of 9/11 to vastly expand its military spending and overseas military presence; such policies would otherwise have met considerable resistance, domestic and international. The US leadership uses the occasion of the war on terrorism to implement an essentially imperial project. It is bent on using the occasion to seize strategic geopolitical positions and bridgeheads, in the process serving corporate interests (particularly of the energy sector) as well as political and military objectives. Considering that the major Congressional committees are bipartisan, this must be viewed as an essentially bipartisan project. The United States capitalizes on its present status as sole superpower to try to secure its continued primacy over the next 50 years. That it does so is not surprising; the way it does destabilizes international conditions.

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