

**Energy security and terrorism:
Perceptions and narratives for an old war of fire**

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“You are either with us or against us in the fight against terror”

George Bush (November 6, 2001)

“In clear terms is a religious-economic war”

Osama Bin Laden (January 4, 2004)

“We need to interpret interpretations more than interpret things”

Michel de Montaigne

“The enemy is the game, we the hunters”

Australian Army training instruction pamphlet

“If you want to kick the tiger in his ass, you’d better have a plan for dealing with his
teeth”

Tom Clancy (“The Teeth of the Tiger”, 2003)

Concluding his book “The World is Flat”, Thomas Friedman consider two dates as the most important opposite moments of the process of globalization: 11/9 and 9/11.

The first one: 9th November 1989, the fall of Berlin’s Wall, stands for what was considered as the starting point to imagine the world could be different, the moment of the “creative imagination”.

On the opposite side we find 11th September 2001, the dramatic moment of the “destructive imagination”².

If we were request to draw an imaginary direct line connecting the first date (9th Nov 1989) to the most recent one of 26th November 2006 (date of the Riga NATO summit) the IR expert’s attentive eyes would be able to “intercept” constants and variables on this historical sequence.

If Fukuyama’s³ last man, despite the “astrological forecasts” of Huntington⁴, naively thought after the implosion of the soviet communism a new peaceful world order, based on liberalism, would have been possible, then the terrorist attacks on New York, Bali, Istanbul, Madrid, and London have been perceived as a threat to his immaculate, narcissistic, and a-historical optimism.

His “great expectations” were rooted in the ashes of a “Dangerous Peace”⁵ where the constant of “conflicts” were remerging after the variable of the “soviet communism”. Definitely the world map that slowly was reshaping itself in his bedroom was completely different from the ones in his college textbooks.

And in this period other events have take part at that “chaos” and “disorder” that the very politician has to take in consideration without having gone astray for the “imagination of the same very thinks”⁶.

So while the First Gulf War and the conflict in Bosnia saluted the dawn of a “new world security disorder”, the supposed Bin Laden’s⁷ “fatwa”, and the emergence of the threat of a post-modern terrorism⁸, were imposing new players and new rule to an old confrontation, filling in this way the vacuum left by the “threat deficit”.

With the aim to provide some answers to the typical notion of security:

- What is being secured;
- What it is being secured against;
- Who provides security;
- And what methods can be undertaken to provide it;

we will focus on the role of narrative in constructing both power relations and geopolitical territory of fear.

With this purpose we will start analysing the discourse of the US National Intelligence Council, the new US plan for the “Long War”, the advertisement of one of the leading oil companies, and finally the concept of jihad according Bin Laden.

Overlapping the different narratives we will be able to draw the territory of a Regional Security Complex which not only overlaps with the interest of NATO’s countries but its perimeter is larger then the very geographical representation of NATO itself.

Due the constant and rising importance represented by energy resources, we will try to demonstrate that, even if the global war on terror represents a novelty in our perception of history of the last decades, at the last NATO Summit we have witnessed the tentative to replace the war on communism with this new threat of terrorism, with the political purpose to construct consensus for future Alliance operations.

But despite this tentative of bricolaging fear, at the very end energy emerges as the most important geostrategic and geoeconomic challenge of our time, and more lasting and more important than terrorism.

1. The world narrated by the National Intelligence Council

The first tentative to narrate the futures of the world were offered by the American National Intelligence Council, in three studies:

- “Global Trends 2010” (November 1997);
- “Global Trends 2015” (December 2000);
- “Mapping the Global Future” (December 2004).

“Global Trends 2010”⁹, published in November 1997 by the “National Intelligence Council” (NIC), therefore before Sep. 11th, already emphasized how the international landscape would likely change in the short period.

“The structure of the international relations has been based primarily on relations between states, not developments within them. This was true whether under balance of power politics of the 19th century, superpower diplomacy of the last fifty years, or efforts at collective security as embodied in the United Nations. In all three variations order rested on a stable arrangement of power among states”. The report continues with maintaining: “That system is drawing to an end. Three changes, likely to become more pronounced over the next 10-15 years, will render traditional approaches insufficient: first, most conflicts today are internal, not between states; second, some states will fail to meet the basic requirements that bind citizens to their governments; third, governments whose states are relatively immune from poverty and political instability will still find that they are losing control of significant parts of their national agendas due to the globalization and expansion of the economy, and the continuing revolution in information technology”.

According to the NIC, over the coming decades, the United States “will face six global trends that will help shape its national security policies:

- Population: Population will increase by 1.2 billion to over 7 billion by 2010. About 95% of this growth will be in developing countries.
- Growth in Per Capita Income. More winners will be in East Asia and the West; more losers will be in Africa and the Middle East.
- Food. We anticipate genetic engineering fueling a fourth agricultural revolution by the end of this timespan. As in the past, shortages will be man-made.
- Communications. The continued digital data and communications revolution will shrink distances and weaken barriers to the flow of information.
- Energy. Growing populations and per capita income will drive the demand for more energy, particularly as the Chinese and Indian economies expand. By 2010 the world will require added production of petroleum on the order of what OPEC produces now.
- Military Technology & Deterrence. Precision-guided munitions and information technologies will continue to be the hallmarks of the revolution in military affairs. Other countries will have technologically advanced military equipment at their disposal, obtained from arms merchants and other governments. However, no power will be able to match US battlefield technological capabilities during this time frame, and potential adversaries are unlikely to repeat Iraq's mistake in challenging the United States via set-piece conventional warfare.”

“Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts”¹⁰, published in December 2000, although confirms the same elements highlighted in the previous report: “Populations Trends”, “Natural Resources and

Environment”, “Science and Technology”, “The Global Economy”, “National and International Governance”, one important point is added.

“Future Conflict. Through 2015, internal conflicts will pose the most frequent threat to stability around the world. Interstate wars, though less frequent, will grow in lethality due to the availability of more destructive technologies. The international community will have to deal with the military, political, and economic dimensions of the rise of China and India and the continued decline of Russia. (...) Internal conflicts steaming from state repression, religious and ethnic grievances, increasing migration pressures, and/or indigenous protest movements will occur most frequently in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and parts of south and Southeast Asia, Central America and the Andean region. (...) States with poor governance; ethnic, cultural, or religious tensions; weak economies; and porous border will be prime breeding grounds for terrorism. In such states, domestic groups will challenge the entrenched government, and trans-national networks seeking safe havens. (...) Between now and 2015 terrorist tactics will become increasingly sophisticated and designed to achieve mass casualties. We expect the trend toward greater lethality in terrorist attacks to continue.”

When referring to “Central Asia: Regional Spot?” The interests of Russia, China and India – as well as of Iran and Turkey – will intersect in Central Asia; the states of that region will attempt to balance those powers as well as keep the United States and the West engaged to prevent their domination by an outside power. The greatest danger to the region, however, will not be a conflict between states, which is unlikely, but the corrosive impact of communal conflicts and political insurgencies, possibly abetted by outside actors and financed at least in part by narcotraffickers.”

Finally the more recent report of December 2004 “Mapping the Global Future”¹¹ updates the “key global trends”. The topics presented are the same emphasized in the two precedent publication: “the rise of new powers, new challenges to governance, and a more pervasive sense of insecurity, including terrorism”.

But the geopolitical representation of the world is reshaped by: a “rising Asia”, “other Rising State? (Brazil, Indonesia, Russia, and South Africa)”, “the Aging Powers (Europe, Russia, and Japan)”, “Growing Demands for Energy”, “US Unipolarity – How Long Can It Last?”.

When the “more pervasive sense of insecurity” is analyzed, than this is caused by:

- “Transmuting International Terrorism. We expect that by 2020 al-Qa’ida will have been superseded by similarly inspired but more diffuse Islamic extremist groups”.
- “Intensifying Internal Conflict. Lagging economies, ethnic affiliations, intense religious convictions, and youth bulges will align to create a ‘perfect storm’ for internal conflict”.
- “Rising Powers: Tinder for Conflict?. Advantages in modern weaponry – long ranges, precision delivery, and more destructive conventional munitions – create circumstances encouraging the pre-emptive use of military force”.

- “The WMD Factor. Countries without nuclear weapons...may decide to seek them as it becomes clear that their neighbours and regional rivals are already doing so”.

Summarizing we can say that the constant worries of the USA, already confirmed in the two editions of the “US National Security Strategy” (2002 and 2006), are concentrated on:

- The emergence of new rising powers;
- Population’s growth trends;
- Energy resources;
- Security: new conflict and terrorism.

2. The evolution of the USA strategic discourse: from the “War on Terror” to the “Long War”

At the 42nd Munich Conference on Security Policy¹² (February 2006), the US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, explained his country’s defence posture, laying out his country’s military and political agenda for the upcoming years. The new plan, which the Pentagon describes in the preface as “The Long War”, replaces the “war on terror”. The long war represents more than a just linguistic shift: it reflects the ongoing development of US strategic thinking since September 11th attacks.

The new plan envisages “long-duration, complex operations involving the US military and the international partners, waged simultaneously in multiple countries around the world.”¹³

This document, known as the “Quadrennial Defence Review”¹⁴ (QDR) foresees, according to the American generals, that “the struggle...may well be fought in dozens of other countries simultaneously and for many years to come”. The emphasis switches from large-scale conventional military operations, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, towards a rapid deployment of highly mobile, often covert, counter-terrorist forces.

Among specific measures proposed are: an increase in special operations forces by 15% and an extra 3,700 personnel in psychological operations and civil affairs units.

The Pentagon does not pinpoint the countries it sees as future areas of operations but they will stretch beyond the Middle East to the Horn of Africa, North Africa, central and south-east Asia and the northern Caucasus.

This new doctrine will be based on:

- Unconventional approach. Where big investments will be made in signal and human intelligence gathering – spies on the ground. A push will also be made to improve forces’ linguistic skills, with an emphasis on Arabic, Chinese and Farsi;

- Building Partnership. “It will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive capabilities that could enable regional hegemony or hostile action against the US and friendly countries”;
- Priorities:
 - Defeating terrorist networks;
 - Defending the homeland in depth;
 - Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads;
 - Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using weapons of mass destruction.
- Lawrence’s legacy. The authors anticipate US forces being engaged in irregular warfare around the world. They advocate “an indirect approach”, building and working with others, and seeking “to unbalance adversaries physically and psychologically, rather than attacking them where they are strongest or in a manner they expect to be attacked”.

After only few days from the publication of the QDR, the U.S. Department of State, “as part of the National Security Language Initiative” started to offer scholarship to American citizens students of “critical languages: Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Turkish and Urdu”¹⁵.

In this way we can say to have a clearer picture of the American geopolitical spectrum.

3. The oil companies: advertisement and the construction of geopolitical perceptions

Hitherto we have seen how the major world power, despite the “war on terror”, is reshaping a huge geographical space on the premise of its own “national security” and “national interest”.

But this “geopolitical imagi-nation”, using a “Critical Geopolitics”¹⁶ approach, is fed by others authors-actors, not only then state-authors-actors, but by every things that help to build up the structure of the “popular geopolitics”.

Thus enemy’s “perceptions” are created for the “village audience level”¹⁷ using movies, the CNN factor, cartoons, music, and even advertisements.

If we were to give credit to one of the most spread theory that the real motivation behind the current Iraq war is oil, then in this case we should take, and analyse the very advertisements of oil companies.

After all in spite of Helen’s beauty may be behind of Troy’s war there were other hidden motivations.

In July 2005 Chevron publishing a clear advertisement on the Wall Street Journal, the Economist, and the Financial Times, was admitting, at the same time, that oil production was reaching the “Peak Oil”¹⁸: “It took us 125 years to use the first trillion barrels of oil. We’ll use the next trillion in 30”¹⁹.

Exxon/Mobil too, after few days admitted the same “Peak Oil”.

Chevron continued in the following months with further advertisements:

- “the world consumes two barrels of oil for every barrel discovered”;
- “Russia, Iran and Qatar have 58% of the world’s natural gas reserves. The U.S. has 3%.”;
- “Over half the world’s oil lays in five countries”;
- “There are 193 countries in the world. None of them are energy independent. So who’s holding whom over a barrel?”

If we had to overlap the NIC’s reports, the “2006 QDR”, and the U.S. Department of State’s scholarships in front of us will appear a huge geographical area that from the Aegean Sea cost spreads to China’s borders.

It is a wide area where not only Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, and Chinese are spoken, but a region important of energy resources and their distribution²⁰.

4. The jihad narrated by Bin Laden: oil and terrorism

Friedman defines the founders of al-Qaeda “a political phenomenon more than a religious one. I like to call them Islamo-Leninists.”²¹

President Bush recently called them “Muslim fascists”.

Their way to approach the masses is the same used decades ago by Soviet Communist, Fascism, and Nazism, with the same purpose to create “the new man”.

At the beginning of his terrorist activities Bin Laden’s propaganda/message was addressed to the western audience, now his target are the young Muslims as an ideological answer to their sensation of humiliation and confused lost of identity: a “born again conversion”.

Despite Al-Qaida has justified, mythicized, and represented its terrorist attacks in name of a Muslim Jihad against western countries, its very essence is an economic war.

In his geopolitical discourse Bin Laden overlaps:

- The territory of Dar al Islam;
- The idea of a hypothetical Caliphate that from Morocco stretches to Indonesia²²;
- The cybercaliphate’s networks²³;
- Energy resources;
- All those geographical regions where a sensation of humiliation/frustration is lived by Muslim population. Territories that include all those western “ghettos”²⁴ (“index wars”, “index of segregation”).

“In clear terms, it is a religious-economic war (.....) The big powers believe that the Gulf states are the key to controlling the world, due to the presence of the largest oil reserves there (.....) I would like to say a few words to Muslim youths (.....) I

beseech you to strengthen the mujahidin everywhere, particularly in Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, Chechnya, and Afghanistan”.²⁵

In a videotape²⁶ sent to Al-Jazeera (November 1st 2004), bin Laden while addressing his message to the American audience few days before the presidential elections, explains the “four pillars” of his Jihad:

1. Revenge: because in 1982, the USA “permitted the Israelis to invade Lebanon and the American Sixth Fleet helped them in that. This bombardment began and many were killed and injured and others were terrorised and displaced”.
2. The aim is to “continue this policy in bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy”.
3. The targets are “the American people and their economy (.....) the various corporations – whether they are working in the field of arms or oil or reconstruction (.....) (and) the Bush administration-linked mega corporations, like Halliburton and its kind”.
4. Produce a further damage by: “send(ing) two mujhaddin to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written Al-Qaeda, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses (.....) In addition to our having experience in using guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers”.

Three methods comprise Al Qaeda’s economic war against America:

1. destruction of “high qualitative targets by low cost qualitative means” (“Every dollar of Al Qaeda defeated a million dollars”)
2. Forcing the U.S. to sink unsustainable amounts of funding into its defense agencies.
3. Oil, by cutting the “provision line and the feeding to the artery of the life of the crusader’s nation”.

Energy resources are the Achille’s heel not only of American economy but of the world’s, and damages on their distribution system will create serious problem to our societies.

On this geopolitical dimension we have not to forget that “the Islamic world is sitting on oil”²⁷.

Daniel Yergin, Chair of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, recently wrote “Energy security will be the number one topic on the agenda when the group of eight industrialized countries (G-8) meets in St. Petersburg in July”²⁸.

But despite his expectations, the industrialized countries were more prone to accommodate their own energy interests than seeking cooperation.

Just few days before the inaugural ceremony for the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, and during the G8 summit, Condoleeza Riza was signing a security agreement with Turkey, putting a practical start to the QDR 2006.

As the world economy at the moment can not be but addict to oil, overlapping the last representations, the original area is confirmed as a constant of interests: from the Aegean to China.



5. Overlapping narratives: “Fault lines”, oil, terrorism, and “frozen conflicts”

Behind the curtains of the Cold War the game was easier, more political justifiable, with its rituals and rules of engagement more symmetric.

Until that moment for the “homo ludens”²⁹ to wage war was a way to receive the gods’ blessing thus to legitimate his victory.

Will, all the above doctrines and the “democratic” intentions of the “war on terrorism” and “war on tyranny”³⁰, help President Bush³¹ in maintaining a consensus with his allies, and fight against new opponents?

The growing demand for energy – especially by the rising powers – through 2020 will have substantial impact on geopolitical relations.

The likely emergence of China and India as new major global players will transform the geopolitical landscape, with impacts potentially as dramatic as those of the previous two centuries.

The “arriviste” powers – China (1 billion and 300 millions inhabitants) and India (1 billion inhabitants) – which lack adequate domestic energy resources, will have to ensure continued access to outside suppliers; thus, the need for energy will be a major factor in shaping their foreign and defence policies, including expanding naval power.

Experts believe China will need to boost its energy consumption by about 150 percent and India will need nearly double its consumption by 2020 to maintain a steady rate of economic growth³².

Due the fact the United States (300 millions inhabitants) is not the only nation to have assigned greater strategic significance to economic and resource concerns in the post-cold era, its interests are going to clash against the parallel interests of China, India, and other countries.

The crucial swathe of Eurasia between Europe and the Far East, where definitely these interests will clash, is heavily inhabited by Muslims, and has been defined by Brzezinski as the “new Global Balkans”.

“In 2002 the area designated as the Global Balkans contained 68 percent of the world’s proven reserves and 41 percent of the world’s proven natural gas reserves; it accounted for 32 percent of world oil production and 15 percent of world natural gas production. In 2020, the area (together with Russia) is projected to produce roughly 42 million barrels of oil per day – 39 percent of the global production total (107.8 million barrel per day). Three key regions – Europe, the United States, and the Far East – collectively are projected to consume 60 percent of the global production (16 percent, 25 percent, and 19 percent, respectively).”³³

Already in 1997 Brzezinski declared that “for America, the geopolitical prize is Eurasia (.....) (because it) counts for about 60 percent of the world’s GDP and about three-fourths of the world’s known energy resources.”³⁴

But to a more accurate analysis the situation in this area becomes more complicated when we take in consideration not only the terrorist geopolitical goals expressed by Osama bin Laden, but other key factors.

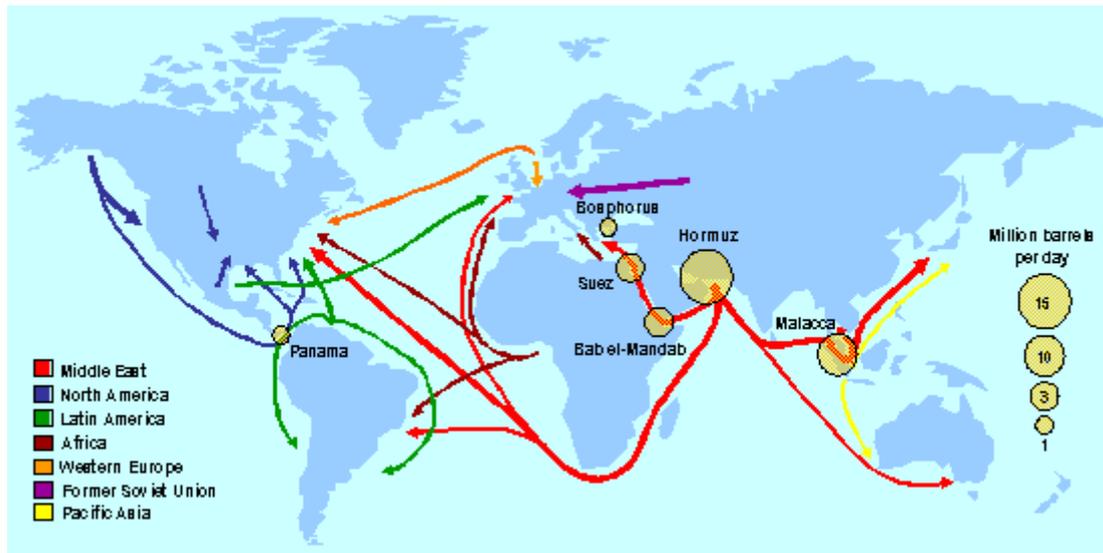
Ethnic hostility, economic injustice, political competition, and “the cudgel of people's war” - (that) without consulting to anyone's tastes or rules, and regardless of anything else, it rose and fell with stupid simplicity, but consistently³⁵ - have the potentiality to light periodic outbreaks of violence.

Increasingly, however, these factors will be linked to disputes over the possession of (or access to) vital materials.³⁶

This area that stretches from the Balkans eastward to “Tartary” might become the seismograph of the world politics and the site of a ruthless struggle for natural resources in the twenty-first century.³⁷

The threat of terrorist attacks against “new-style target” – oil and gas pipelines – is rising and the “new regional theatre of operations” for the coming terrorist attack is already ready.

Not only there is certain proximity with the world oil transit chokepoints (Bab el-Mandab, the Bosphorus, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Suez Canal), but terrorist attacks against oil infrastructures will produce not only economic damages to the government against which they combat and their economic partners, but provide them with the possibility to finance their own terrorist group and murderous activities.



These attacks could take the form of:

- Blowing up pipelines, oil wells, and other oil infrastructures;
- Attacking tankers;
- Menacing the maritime routes through the “chokepoints”;
- Blowing up the office of oil companies and, at the same time, kidnapping or killing their personnel. (Look at the recent case in Nigeria and the terrorist activity of the MEND-Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta).

At the same this “new regional theatre of operations” could witness even the clash of diverging social theories.

The representation given by the following analysis:

- ◆ Market state/non-market state³⁸;
- ◆ Pre-modern/modern/post-modern state³⁹;
- ◆ Jihad Vs. McWorld⁴⁰;
- ◆ Clash of Civilization;
- ◆ “Near enemy”-“Far enemy” of the “Salafit Jihad”⁴¹;
- ◆ Market-Dominant minorities⁴².
- ◆ The world division based on technology: technological innovators, technological adopters, and technological excluded regions;⁴³

Overlap with the representations provided by:

- ◆ Dar al Islam/Dar al Harp;
- ◆ Von Clausewitz’s war theories collide with the ones of Sun Tzu and the Italian General Fabio Mini⁴⁴;
- ◆ the “Crescent of Crisis”⁴⁵;
- ◆ the demographic problem in this area where oil is extracted or distributed;
- ◆ The economic concept of marginal utility applied to a geopolitical representation of conflict aptitude.

It will be along these fault lines that the main conflicts will explode, and Al-Qaeda will profit from the turmoil to recruit, to serve as a mercenary force for proxy wars, and to look for financial sustain from state and non-state actors.

Using his propoganda channels will be easy to depict the “Dar al-Oil” as the “Dar al-Islam”.

Jason Burke, chief reporter for the London “Observer”, noticed that “al-Qaeda describes a function not an entity”.⁴⁶

Moreover the closet organizational relative to al-Qaeda is perhaps a private multinational corporation. And bin Laden himself is perhaps best viewed as a terrorist CEO.

According Bruce Hoffman Bin Laden “has applied business administration and modern management techniques learned both at the university and in the family’s construction business to the running of a transnational terrorist organization. (.....) He has implemented for al-Qaeda the same type of effective organizational framework adopted by many corporate executives throughout much of the industrialized world over the past decade. Just as large, multinational business conglomerates moved during the 1990s to flatter, networked structure, bin Laden did the same with al-Qaeda.”⁴⁷

He has defined a flexible strategy, a “netwar”, an “all-channel or full matrix network where everybody is connected to everybody else.”⁴⁸

According to the last State Department “Country Reports on Terrorism 2004”, the resonance of al-Qaeda’s message has spurred a “grassroots” movement of terrorist cells and networks with no links to al-Qaeda or Osama bin Laden other than ideological affinity.⁴⁹

Bin Laden “Holy War Inc.”⁵⁰ has a large number of “passive supporters”⁵¹ worldwide and can count on training camps in the Caucasus, in the Balkans, in Central Asia, in Africa, in Iraq⁵², and in the lawless “tri-border” region of South America, where Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina meet.

In the future al-Qaeda due the nature of its economic war is probably going to devolve into more local franchises, already the “encyclopaedia of jihad”, parts of which are available on-line, provide instructions for creating “clandestine activity cells”, with units for intelligence, supply, planning and preparation, and implementation.

Moreover recent attacks suggest that criminal networks and terrorist groups are teaming up with growing regularity for their mutual benefit.⁵³

Talking about the more specific area of the Caucasus, already C.J. Dick⁵⁴ analysed the negative potentiality of “frozen conflicts” present in this region.

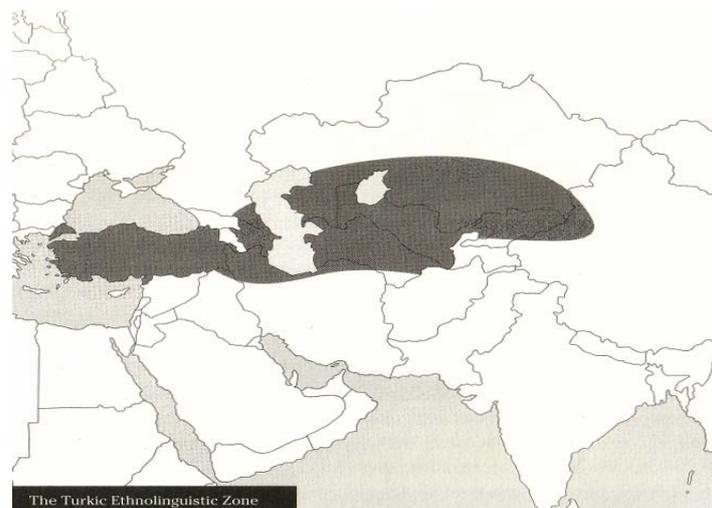
Thus, if in these fault-lines independent movements will reclaim the control of portion of territory we will experience conflicts which according Van Creveld “will have more in common with the struggles of primitive tribes than with large-scale conventional war”⁵⁵.

Thus, a dangerous move from war as “bellum” (strife), to war as “werra” (slaughter), where warfare itself is locally conceived as a ritualized form of territorial demarcation.

In a recent article published on the International Herald Tribune, Thomas L. Friedman is very clear : “Energy is the most important geostrategic and geoeconomic challenge of our time”⁵⁶, so significant that in this historical period defined “post-post-Cold War” the ”axis of oil” (Russia, Venezuela, Iran) it is more lasting and more important than terrorism”⁵⁷.

It can not be a coincidence but “the integration of the administration’s antiterrorism and energy protection policies into a strategic framework is vividly evident in Georgia, the leading recipient of U.S. aid in the region”.⁵⁸

According Prof. Klare, director of the “Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies”: “Even without the involvement of Russia and the United States, the Caspian Sea basin would be prey to periodic upheavals and violence in the period ahead. The most likely outcome of such friction (...) is the out break of proxy war involving local governments and insurgent groups backed by a major power. Such antagonism could take the form of all-out combat but more likely to involve persistent but low-grade warfare in border zones and embattled ethnic enclaves”.⁵⁹



6. Bricolaging fear: NATO, terrorism, and oil

The shapes such potential conflicts can have in this “new regional theatre of operations” are the following:

- Warre (Hobbes: “a warre of all against all”);
- Low intensity conflicts;
- Proxy war;
- Netwar⁶⁰;
- Network War⁶¹;

- Franchising terrorism;
- 4th Generation Warfare⁶²;
- Asymmetric Warfare⁶³;
- “Iraqization”⁶⁴.

These conflicts will have devastating impacts on the five sectors already highlighted by Buzan⁶⁵: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sector.

If the target is the “Market State” what is better than to hit its Achilles’s heel⁶⁶: the “economic target” represented by oil?

Terrorism is:

- ◆ “Terrorism is after all a tactic”⁶⁷;
- ◆ “Terrorism is a tool, not an actor”⁶⁸;
- ◆ and “Terrorism represents the privatization of war, the pre-modern state with teeth”⁶⁹.

Due to the strategic importance of the area, NATO countries seeing their economic interests at stake will be called to operate and intervene in these regions.

Already the NATO New Strategic Concept (signed April 24th 1999) was declaring in two articles⁷⁰:

- Art. 20: “Ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, inadequate or failed efforts at reform, the abuse of human rights, and the dissolution of states can lead to local and even regional instability”;
- Art. 24: “Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organized crime and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources”.⁷¹

The geographical area hitherto considered, it is not only mined by “Ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes (...) and even regional instability” but is crossed by “the flow of vital resources” represented by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline⁷².

“Of all the resources (...), none is more likely to provoke conflict between states in the twenty-first century than oil. Petroleum stands out from other materials – water, minerals, timber, and so on – because of its pivotal role in the global economy and its capacity to ignite large-scale combat”.⁷³

A testimony of how NATO is glancing at this region crossed by the BTC has been the recent meeting between the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliiev, and the NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Scheffer.

At the end of the meeting the NATO Secretary General stated that: “The geo-strategic aspects and the political aspects of energy security are important for NATO (...) and Azerbaijan is an important player and is becoming an even more important player in the whole discussion of oil and gas supply.”⁷⁴

Even if there is a debate going on among NATO members on the topic of energy security, the agenda of the more recent NATO summit was very clear.

The summit, entitled “Transforming NATO in a New Global Era”⁷⁵, not only has seen the American President declaring “NATO is in transition from a static force to an expeditionary force” but has confirmed the “mimesis” between energy security, global war on terrorism and the geographical representation and demarcation of the “new regional theatre of operation”.

Already the USA are putting in practice the “Lawrence’s legacy” using the NATO infrastructure and the discourse of the “Global Partnership”.

“Partnership” which by other NATO members is perceived as another label for the “coalitions of the willing” in which the United States would pick and choose its allies, whether they are NATO members or not, depending on the mission”.⁷⁶

A syllogism where the combination of the Alliance security interests and the representation of the “new regional theatre of operations”, match a spatial perimeter larger than the very geographical border of its state members, and provide the shape of a “Regional Security Complex”.⁷⁷

A “Regional Security Complex” where energy emerges as the constant challenge, despite the tentative to replace the war on soviet communism with the war on terrorism as the main strategic motivation of the Alliance⁷⁸.

An anxious Alliance searching for the “Other”: as “Ahab owes his existence and also his nature to Moby Dick. (...) Shall we say that Moby Dick creates Ahab and, in addition, denotes him, and construe at least the denoting on the model of linguistic referring?”⁷⁹

In a recent article published on the NATO Review, the Italian Chief of the General Staff, Admiral Di Paola, depicts this cartographic discourse where “core-gap-energy recourses” become one region: “Close observation reveals that instability and present and future crises tend to occur in the belt containing the contact areas between two contrasting geo-political entities: a globalised core and a disconnected gap. This belt runs through Europe and Asia, in some places reaching areas that lie very close to the Mediterranean Sea and EU territory. It also borders areas that are strategically important due to the presence of oil reserves and, especially in the Pacific area, of vital lines of communication for the world maritime trade.”⁸⁰

To further understand how the threat to energy resources has evolved we can read the following two initiatives presented at the NATO Summit:

- The first one promoted by the American Senator Richard Lugar, “Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee”. Lugar declared that: “We are used to thinking in terms of conventional warfare between nations, but energy is becoming the weapon of choice for those who possess it, and the use of energy as a weapon might require NATO to review what alliance obligations would be in such cases”. And invoking art. 5 of the Alliance Charter in case of military attack: “any NATO member whose energy sources are cut off by force should

be able to rely on assistance from the alliance because an attack using energy can devastate a nation's economy";⁸¹

- The second one by Jamie Shea, Director of Policy Planning at NATO.
"An Energy Security and Intelligence Analysis Cell could be established by the North Atlantic Council. A similar intelligence unit has been set up to deal with the issue of terrorism and has been successful. Alternatively, we could broaden the mandate of the terrorist intelligence unit to include a specific focus on intelligence related to energy security. Intelligence could be gathered from Allies, Partners, industry and government sources. The Special Committee could also play a role in facilitating intelligence-sharing between different entities in the field of energy security."⁸²

Even in this context, the potential NATO operations, in/out area, of the types "traditional" and "policing", peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, are going to overlap on this area.⁸³

"The battle over Caspian pipelines, the coming conflict between Iran and Azerbaijan (...), chaos in Georgia (...), such might be tomorrow headlines. Confronting them will require Western leaders who understand power and the use of it – leaders who know when to intervene, and so without illusions".⁸⁴

What is necessary to this point is a revision of the classical approach to conflict resolution and peacekeeping operation because NATO or European soldiers will be called to operate more as policy forces than with a war-fighting role, and the integration and understanding of the local culture, the local narrative, is a must for a positive result of the military mission.

The new forces called to operate in these theatres will need the support of experts (integrated at squad/platoon level) of "cultural intelligence-CULTINT" because "intelligence has a vital role to play in determining identity and intent, and in understanding the enemy instead of just counting him".⁸⁵

A cultural intelligence able to identify, and translate the anthropological elements, motivations, behaviourism, language, signs, myths, emotions and the "furor", which in a certain moment transform a "non combatant" mass in a contagious⁸⁶ "war machine": the creative and involutory process of "becoming-animal and war machine"⁸⁷.

Concluding: "There is good reason to expect future combat in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and that will take place in capital or other large urban formations, and those who ignore the past are not merely compelled to relieve it, but in this case to suffer from it".⁸⁸

In a historical moment where the consuming countries are nationalizing their energy companies⁸⁹ and the producing ones are "nationalizing" their wells (Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador) "Higher demand has put pressure on energy networks, supplies have had trouble catching up with consumption, and tensions have risen. Today, every drop counts"⁹⁰.

Unfortunately "we are drowning in the devil's excrement".⁹¹

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