

"Pan-national criminal activities" : SOME IDEAS ABOUT THE GLOBAL TERRORIST MENACE

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- September 11, 2001 has relieved us of the need to sensitize the public to emerging terrorist threats or developing theories regarding terrorist aims and methods.

Unfortunately, we have been able to see the concrete reality of world chaos, and every one of us has been able to watch it on live television.

- Time for doubt and calculation has passed. It's time to reflect on how best to provide ourselves the instruments for knowledge, thought and action.

The goal now is to designate the enemy. This is a `regalian prerogative` (one of those prerogatives reserved exclusively to the state), which means it is the exclusive role of governments, and to know who this enemy is.

This implies analyzing world disorder, defining the current criminal reality. That especially implies clearing the horizon where the new challenges appear, and thinking in terms of early detection and action.

- In this world chaos, this anarchistic state of the world, it has become increasingly difficult to designate and know the enemy because of its new nature. The enemy is less and less a State, with the exception, for instance of the would be conflict between India and Pakistan, less and less a definite entity characterized by a territory, a population and a government ; the enemy consists more and more of fuzzy entities the knowledge of which necessitates much greater attention.

- One can allege that in themselves, these threats are not really new in their manifestations, their methods, their essence. On the other hand we consider that they are new because of the mixture which makes their nature change from a chemical point of view.

This is this new menace that we are going to try and analyze now. In three points: first define concepts, second, give examples and third make short proposals to fight back.

I - Concepts

- These international groups that represent today the forms of threats which endanger us in terms of individuals as in terms of the principles of our social organization are what we call today "non military, strategic level threats ". These threatening entities are more and more polymorphic, hybrid, protoplasmic, while being particularly dangerous.

- This hybridization is the result of the following components:

1. These entities usually mix political, ideological or religious action with all types of violent and criminal activities.

2. Nowadays these entities operate more according to galactic or planetary systems than to pyramidal chains of command: there is a hardcore and groups that have more or less implications gravitating around it; the doctrine doesn't necessarily emanate from the center as part can bring its own share.

3. These entities are disseminated all over the world:

- * they are very mobile,
- * they have a relatively low profile, but not all of them,
- * they use diasporas not to appear too clearly (as camouflage) and for logistics,
- * but they also may have sanctuaries, generally "gray areas" (concept) or disrupted states (concept)

4 The "cause" of these entities can be anything: ideology, money, both, revenge, envy ... This goes from religious extremism to antiglobalization movements (a nebula to watch closely) as well as sectarian beliefs or traditional organized crime.

5 Their targets are democracy and the Western way of life

6 All these entities use very similar fighting tools. It is mostly the " low cost-high effect mean" we call terrorism.

The financing of these threatening entities is less and less state sponsored, with the exception of the World's "grey areas" and more and more "private" or autonomous: laundered criminal money, "revolutionary tax" as well as "donations" turned in black money for criminal uses.

Brought together, these elements bring about a chemical change of nature, a metamorphosis (to explain: water changes into steam). This metamorphosis causes an exponential increase in the danger because it deprives us of more traditional landmarks.

The final result is that the emergent threats that are materialized in these entities radically jeopardize our way of living and all the principles that democratic societies tried to build for years.

So, what are the problems that we can summarize concerning these fuzzy groups:

- basically, their motivations and claims are not obvious...
- As for organization, we have to think in terms of networks and moral authority and no more in terms of chain of command as in our own, traditional military.

Altogether, our work is more difficult and we have to be flexible.

II - Examples

Examples of fuzzy groups can come from many different fields.

. Older or precursory: based on a guerrilla and an ideology.

Example the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party)

. The menace can also be completely informal, for instance the increase of maritime piracy.

Indeed, there is no clearer symptom of world disorder than piracy. Nothing new as it existed even at the time of Roman empire but was almost stopped when nation states decided some common rules in the nineteenth century.

In fact there are very few more vivid criminal forms today. According to the International Maritime Bureau, there were 469 known attacks against ships in the year 2000 - 5 times more than in 1995. In 2000 also, 72 sailors were slaughtered – versus 3 in 1999. One must know that 90 % of international

freight is transported by ships. Half of this traffic uses the Asian seas, that are today almost in an anarchistic state. It is indeed between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean that three quarters of the 469 attacks of 2000 happened.

- **18th street** (to develop)

- **Al Qaeda** (18th St gives a lighting of a type of planetary organisation)

III – What are the answers? We can define here some very schematic tracks for proposals.

First, our growing knowledge of these fuzzy entities should prevent our fear ; second, we may have to question some of our principles.

We need a real early warning system. We need to detect the threats at the very time they appear: every blossom should attract our attention before it comes to flower.

That means it is necessary that the intelligence community effectively act as a sentinel; that means it has to work in direct line with the policy makers and has to be listened to. The best intelligence in the world can be rendered useless if policymakers refuse to heed it for political or other motives, or because the information does not fit into their preconceptions.

This also implies giving again a more important place to human sources (HUMINT) because technical sources, even providing essential assistance, have their limits: war in Afghanistan gives us an unfortunate valid example..

As terrorism appears to be the ultimate crime against human rights, the principle of due proportionality should authorize us to be proactive. It would be necessary to engage in proactive intelligence based operations and not only on the legal evidence accepted by the courts.

An example of intelligence based proactive operation.

In January 1993, just off Cyprus, several frogmen and three frigates of the Turkish navy intercepted a Panamanian freighter chartered by two Istanbul "Maffya" dons. In its hold were 14 metric tons of Afghan heroin, valued at \$25 billion wholesale. Monitored from Karachi by US satellites, the freighter "Lucky S" was due to deliver its heroin in Turkey, Cyprus, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands.

A few weeks ago the same type of intelligence based operation allowed the Israelis to seize a freighter loaded with small arms.

This questioning of our principles is undoubtedly the price to be paid to protect us from these new threats. And it is also the price to be paid to preserve our way of life and our freedom.

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