

*An asymmetric
antagonism*

Why terrorism has become a global asymmetrical challenge ?

Once mainly procommunism, Islamic integralism supplied it with a more popular global cause

No state could hope to stand up to US in conventional wars, terrorism provided an alternative

Terrorism, once a threat among others, has been elevated to the rank of a main global threats to the US

Asymmetry as seen by terrorism

.It is flexible, versatile, no urgency to win,

. no organised system but a network of cells

.it exploits with ease the media and the virtual world

.no alliances and coalitions but easily reachable groupings

.no power projection but a “hard core” of militants, plus locals using civilian facilities

. tolerates more social disruptions and loss of human life

The West:an ideal antagonist of terrorism.

open democracies , free speech, human rights,loose controls

information easily available to everyone

Media help terrorists assess their own moves

aversion to casualties

ups and downs of consensus reduce will to resist

and

complex organisations slow to react , resistant to changes

internal rivalries and bureaucratic sluggishness

Generous offer of important targets to terrorism

Changes are slow, difficult and costly

US: one strategy for two wars

yes

- a “high tech strategy” for a post heroic war.

but

no political and military strategy for the post war scenario

no clear coalition policy

to much reliance on technology

. Short of soldiers for a manpower intensive challenge

Political and strategic options for the West

Concentrate on terrorism but not ignore other challenges.

. Not to spend too many resources on homeland defence.

. soft and hard policies within a common politico-strategic vision

. An adequate role for NATO and the EU

. Use of force against terrorism should go along with prevention

. Coherence between declarations and actions (ç)

. Long term vision for politics, military posture, intelligence,

In the Politico-military field

Rather than an exit strategy one for post conflict stability

To "win hearts and minds " politics and operations must be consistent with one another.

when war ends, replace battle proven units with other trained peace support operations for the specific area.

Above solution would require deeper collaboration.

ruthless counter terrorism: immediate success, long term failures

Less intrusive overseas military basing

control terrorists in the virtual world

spread the top down and bottom up use of C4ISR

Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconception Events must be judged in the light of its own peculiarities

Carl von Clausewitz , On war