Transnational Criminal Organizations (Mafias) • "Degenerate Guerrillas" • Gangster - Terrorist hybrids •
Violent Irrational Groups • Piracy •"Grays Areas", etc.
NEW THREATS :
THE STRATEGIC OUTLOOK
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Sommaire

I- The Heart of the Matter

Are the "New Threats" Really New ?

When confronted with something new, people always tend to waver between two reactions. The French
sociologist Pierre Bourdieu summed it up brilliantly : "the illusion of 'never seen it before' and the
illusion of 'the same old thing'." Note, however, that bureaucrats have a subtle preference for "the same
old thing." When it comes to new threats, a common response is thus to say "there's nothing new under
the sun." "We have known it for a long time." This is the classic reaction. Any bureaucracy, when
confronted with a disturbing new development, offers this three-pronged response :
1) It is a media hoax (or, alternatively, a plot to distract us from our vital mission),
2) We have known all about it for quite sometime,
3) The problem is, of course, a real one,but it is minor, and has been resolved.
A word of caution is in order. As soon as we move away from the facts and start tinkering with new
threats - now you see them, now you don't - it becomes impossible to penetrate the reality of dangerous
groups and territories, and we are relegated to the proverbial "game of catch-up."
There really is something new. It is easy to prove, using Karl Marx's image that compared revolution to
water on the stove. Until it reaches the boiling point, the water changes only in terms of degree. Once it
hits 212° and becomes steam, it changes its nature. Compared to a revolt, or a riot, a revolution represents
a change in the nature, not the degree, of a country's socio-political reality. The same is true of the new
threats.
In scientific parlance, the end of the bipolar order has caused the mutation of a host of organisms that
used to be purely terrorist groups or purely criminal groups. In other words, they have abruptly and
unexpectedly shifted from machines to lifeforms.
"Machines," because it used to be that most non-state strategic-level violence, i.e., transnational
terrorism, was waged by groups organized or recruited by intelligence agencies working for states.
Secretly, obeying orders, they operated like machines, following start/stop signals.
"Lifeforms," because now we are witnessing an almost biological, uncontollable, and, thus far,
uncontrolled, proliferation of dangerous, complex entities that are very hard to identify, understand, and
define, within inadequately explored territories or movements.
In concrete terms, denying that these new threats exist gives rise to the notion that the organizations that
monitor dangerspots and dangerous groups can remain unchanged, even though they are ill-suited(stable
and slow) to these mutant entities (unstable and quick). The result is that now our ability to diagnose the
actual danger of these entities is still too limited.
n A Media Hoax ? The Media's Silence in These Matters

In today's world, where information and communication play such important roles, it is striking to see how immense and sometimes dangerous groups can move about completely undetected, and remain, sometimes for quite a long time, outside the media glare. This has been the case with some of the major transnational Islamic fundamentalist movements, such as the Ikhwan (the Muslim Brotherhood), the Salafiyyah, or the Tablighi, whose role behind the scenes has nevertheless been crucial in some events that have gotten the press riled up. Take for example, the major daily newspapers, wich devote whole pages to specific events, such as Iranian state-sponsored terrorist attacks or strikes by the Palestinian group Hamas. They have never said a word about the important Islamic fundamentalist movements mentioned above. One begins to wonder if these great media outlets even know that these movements exist.

This head-in-the-sand mentality extends to the new threats as a whole. While their effects are dealt with in the media (heavy coverage of the Golden Triangle, for example), the causes (in this instance, the concept of "gray areas") seem to have a hard time attracting media attention - when the media venture into this domain at all, given their intense resistance to any original idea from outside.

Thus, the new threats are anything but a media hoax. On the contrary, as an original development, they are grossly underreported. Naturally, complex phenomena are not always easy to convey in pictures and news articles. But beyond that, one senses a clear reluctance to leave the game of mirrors and one's clearly marked turf behind to delve into basically dangerous individuals or to poke into the terra incognitae (in the true sense of the term) of today's disordely world.

n Reminder : Which are the Truly Dangerous Groups in Today's World ?

The operative words here are "truly" and "today." The new threats are a lot more than fuzzy silhouettes in hazy far-away lands. They are a reality, here and now. Some examples :

• Transnational Criminal Organizations (Mafias)

May 1997, Colombia : In a hangar west of Bogota, the police uncovered a telecommunications station containing at least $ 10 million worth of hi-tech material. Established by the drug lord Efrain "Don Efra" Hernandez, murdered in 1996, the station enabled all the cartels, on a time-share basis, to maintain constant satellite contact with their fleets of aircraft or boats (on the high seas and high in the skies), and with their representatives throughout the world.

• "Degenerate guerillas"
These are the most dangerous terrorist groups in today's world. According to a report published in April 1997 by the U.S. Department of state, 200 of the 311 deaths caused by "international terrorism" in 1996 were attributable to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and 76 of the 296 attacks counted by th U.S. government last year were the work of the PKK.

• Gangster-Terrorist Hybrid
April 1997, Bridgeport, Texas : The police arrested four individuals (an unemployed man, a tattoo artist and his wife, and a plumber's appprentice), unknown to intelligence services, although with loose ties to the Ku Klux Klan. The four of them, turned in by frightened accomplice, were preparing to blow up the local gasworks, and take advantage of the panic unleashed by the release of deadly gasses to attack a bank. Had it come off, the attack could easily have left hundreds dead.

In January 1997, the Public Prosecutor of Bastia, Corsica, announced that there had been 574 bomb attacks on the island in 1996, including 148 that were "politically" motivated bombings). According to the magistrate, whether the attacks have a "political" motivation or not, the bombs are being planted by the same individuals, whose attacks involve terrorism 25 percent of the time, and simple gangsterism the rest of the time.

• Violent Irrational Groups
In Japan, the 1997 Shoko Asahara trial exposed how sophisticated and complex an organization Aum Shinrikyo really was, when it was able to :
- Extort hundreds of millions of dollars, particularly from its followers;
- Recruit Hundreds of brilliant students, most in fields of advanced science;
- Set up a worldwide supply network for hazardous substances, weapons, explosives, etc., managed by capable businessmen;
- Establish, particularly in Russia, important "branch offices";
- Murder, over the course of several years, "traitors" to the sect, with complete impunity.

• "Gray areas" : The Golden Triangle Extends its Borders
In the past two years, drug traffickers and other warlords in the Golden Triangle have become increasingly active in Indochina --so much so that much of northern Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam ae now "under their sway." From 1985 to 1995, opium production doubled in the region. Drug addiction has become a problem even for the local populace. May 1997, analyses conducted near the Chinese border in northern Vietnam revealed traces of heroin in the urine of 10 percent oh the high school students.

This is when one hears, after "it's nothing new," the protest "it's far away." Turkey, Colombia, Ceylon, Japan, and the bordelands of Burma and China really are quite far from Europe or North America. But a word of caution is in order. Millions of natives of the planet's most chaotic regions now inhabit the major cities of the developed world, having fled horrid situations, and are, for the most part, just trying to lead a decent life. But how many partisans of the degenerate guerillas are there among them? How many accomplices of drug traffickers are there, willing or coerced?

Clearly, these are not false threats, nor are they remote. Dangerous territories and groups are not confined to the far-off jungles of the Third World; they are also found in the hearts of our major cities, or,even more often, in their outskirts.

n Dangerous, but Not Evident : The United States and the New Threats
There are currently two basic schools of thought in the United States regarding these new threats, but one goes too far, and the other falls short.

Blending mysticism and science fiction, the first school[1] has developed the notion that it is now pratically impossible to imagine what society will be like tomorrow, when the "infosphere" will be the driving force. They thus conclude that is thoroughly impossible to guess what dangers lie in store.

Unlike the mystics, the skeptics' approach is quite ordinary. Because of its powerful position, the United States is experiencing a strategic lull. An era of calm has begun.[2] Naturally, "the subject of new threats is complicated" and "ethnic, religious, or sectarian violence offer us a never-ending succession of Somalias, Haitis, and Yougoslavias," but that's all right. No cause for alarm. Just a few lice in the lion's mane. As for a solution, "the United States will need a solid intelligence establishment, able to analyze the world and to sound an early warning when the dangers posed by these highly complex threats appear." Further more, "American strategists will have to think about restructuring the defense and security communities,

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[1] "The War After Byte City," Michael Vlahos, The Washington Quaterly, Spring 1997.

[2] The quotations that follow are takenfrom "A New Millennium and a Strategic Breathing Place," The Washington Quaterly, Spring 1997. The author, Russell E. Travers, is an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency.

wich are ill-suited to today's world." But let's stay calm and "be careful not to spoil this strategic opportunity (i.e., the lull) by panicking over threats that in reality do not even exist."

In the area of arms procurement, one senses the same gap between the long-term and short-term approaches, between mirages of the future and sometimes mundane requirements of the moment. Strictly speaking, it could be said that the United States has its head in the hi-tech clouds and its feet on ground that is a low-tech as it could be. The Pentagon orders Stealth bombers costing $ 3 billion apiece, without really knowing what they will be used for,[3] while the U.S. First Armored Division needed three weeks of 1995 just to cross a flood-swollen river in Bosnia, without encountering a single shot of enemy fire. Nowadays, the prevailing trend in real warfare is chaos, and in chaotic encounters, the more sophisticated the hardware, the less effective it is. During the Lebanese civil war, U.S. fighter planes made one sortie, just one. But the result was two aircraft lost ($ 60 million) and the humiliation of having to ransom a pilot from Hafiz al-Asad and some Palestinian gangleaders.

[3] See "The Pentagon is Hooked on Fancy Weapons It Doesn't Need," William Pfaff, Herald Tribune, May 22, 1997.

II - Today, a chaotic World

No doubt about it, the world is in disorder; but before we assume the sky is falling in, we would do well to remember that not every disappearance is necessarily tragic, and not every disruption is terrible, in and of itself.

n World Chaos, NewThreats : Where are the Traps, the extremes?

• Is the state really disappearing throughout the entire Third World? Or is this just another "media illusion," (just as one would say an "optical illusion"), a mirage?

Clearly, there are some regions that are out of control. But this does not mean that the Third World is becoming a hemispere-size no-man's land. Ahmed Ould Abdallah, who served for two years as the U.N. Secretary General's special envoy to Burundi, offers compelling proof. In his book, "La diplomatie pyromane" (Diplomatic Arson),[4] he notes : "When I got back to New York from Bujumbura, I was surprised to hear my New-York friends always talking about failed states. In Burundi and Rwanda, the state has not failed at all. In Rwanda, you can find lists of people who are to be killed off, with certified file copies for the Police. Furthermore, in Bujumbura, I never saw an official document that was not duly initialed and signed, or an official paper sent to the President or Prime Minister that was not in a folder bearing the national crest. Protocol is scrupulously upheld. The state has been weakened by unrest, but it is still there.

•"The old order changeth..."

In the Third World, private companies are starting to replace corrupt local officials (see below). One example, again taken from Africa : "Mozambique has just become the first in the world to hire a private British firm to run its customs service. Is this necessarily a bad thing? Naturally, one might lament the fact that a state has relinquished one of its prerogatives. But considering how, in many African countries, the customhouse is just a gravy train for a "well placed" minority, a sinecure, is it not bette to be realistic and to accept a necessary solution that is in everyone's interest, particularly the weak ones"?[5]

• Is sectarianism (a polite term for tribal warfare) irreversible, or simply a matter of ups and downs, like a blood pressure reading?

During periods of crisis, humans always spontaneously form networks. In Europe, during World War II, there were resistance networks, to be sure, but also black market networks. Thus, is all this globalization, and the sectarianism it breeds, a permanent return to a tribal mentality, or is it just a temporary turning inward by communities coming in from a new cold wind? "In Burundi, as in Rwanda, everyone is a potential extremist, and becomes one when the pressure gets extreme, when one fears for one's life, or is forced to join one's "own" camp, to avoid being killed."[6]

Likewise, for the major transnational crime organizations, are these really permanent mutations, or is it pure and simple opportunism at work, dictated by incredibly favorable circumstances (European borders that are wide open for criminals, even though the police still have to respect them scrupulously)?

• Will this Worldwide chaos last, or is just adjustment anxiety, a relatively long episode between two world orders?

Think of the Lebanese civil war, so chaotic that it spawned the term "lebanonization." Then, one fine day, when nothing had really changed on the playing field (hostile tribes and clans, billions being earned in drug trafficking, huge stocks of weapons, overlapping mini-territories, ancient bloodfeuds, religious fanaticism, etc.), the civil war suddenly ended, as if someone had blown a whistle, just as quickly as it started. But just before that, the "experts" had naturally predicted that it would last for another decade, if not forever. So the question is wheter the new worldwide disorder is an episode born of crisis, of imbalance, limited in duration, following the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the bipolar world order ("world history moves from catastrophe to catastrophe" said Oswald Spengler), or if chaos is now an inevitable feature of a human society fragmented by globalization.

n What are the Real Conflicts in today's World ?

Even back during the Cold War, most conflicts were not "conventional" wars between two armies in uniforms, fighting according to the rules of war. From 1945 to 1990, there were approximately 75 impor-

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[4] "La diplomatie pyromane", Ahmed Ould Abdallah, Calmann-Lévy, November 1996.

[5] La diplomatie pyromane, op. cit. Ould Abdallah knows wherein of he speaks : he has held several cabinet post in his native Mauritania.

[6] La diplomatie pyromane, op. cit.

tant conflicts : 28 following the classic rules mentioned above, and 46 insurrections, serious civil wars, etc. The latter cost a total of nearly 20 million lives, and were thus infinitely more deadly than the 28 "conventional" wars.

Today, the count is easily made, since one side of the scales is quite simply empty. The last of the "conventional" wars are now fading into the past : the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Falklands (1982), Iran-Iraq (1980-88), and the Gulf War (1991).

Depending on the level of deadliness chosen, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) counted 31 conflicts in 1994, while the National Defense Council Foundation (NDCF, a Washington think tank), counted 71 a year later (the NDCF list for 1989 included only 35 conflict). Naturally both tallies included Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Burma, Kashmir (India), Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sri Lanka (the Tamils), Tajikistan, Chechnya (Russia), Turkey (the PKK), the former Yugoslavia, etc.

Upon closer scrutiny, both lists reveal nothing but internal conflicts, civil wars or wars motivated by religious fanaticism, guerilla warfare, terrorist campaigns, protracted insurrections, and tribal wars. Three-quarters of the time, there are known ties between armed operations and drug trafficking. None of these conflicts involves two "conventional" armies, two identified and recognized nation-states. Sometimes an organized army is pitted against militias, troops loyal to warlords, or guerilla groups. Often, they are actual Liberia-type bandenkriege (warfare by armed gangs, in German), if not criminal anarchy, as in Albania.

The conclusion to be drawn is that conflicts between authorities (conventionnal armies, for example) are becoming rarer, and those between substances (amorphous, either by their very nature, or because of abrupt change) are becoming more frequent. The conventional observer is hard-pressed to pinpoint the exact nature of these substances or the space they occupy. New concepts have had to be developed (gray areas, degenerate guerillas, hybrid criminal groups, etc.). It is even harder for the strategists, who see absolutely nothing in common between these two elements. How can one conceive of these substances as belligerents? In southern Albania, how does one tell the difference between a mighty mafioso and an innocent fisherman in the port of Vlorë?

n Military "Privatizations" in the ThirdWorld : Myth or Reality?

What we are actually witnessing is the end of a process that began in Europe more than three centuries ago. Since the end of theThirty Years' War (see Annex), the nation-states that were taking shape have endeavored to exercise increasingly stricter control, the ultimate goal being total monopoly over the application of armed violence. As indicated above, these same nation-states are now virtually incapable of confronting one another, while armed groups at either the supranational or infranational level are at the root of all armed violence currently being waged on the planet.

In March 1997, The United Nations published a documented report on mercenary activities, revealing that this business was rapidly expanding in a number of crisis-ridden countries (Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Rwanda, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslavia, Zaire, etc.).

Outside of Europe, security (policework, etc.) is increasingly being privatized. In the South African Republic, for example, private police forces (320,000 security agents) outnumber government police forces and their gross earnings are up 30 percent per year : US$ 763 millions in 1996. Now in the rest of Southern Africa : in Nairobi, Kenya, 180 security companies have been established employing more than 20,000 agents. In Angola, there are more than 100 of these companies. And the list does not stop there.

From a more strictly military perspective (anti-guerilla operations, etc.), Latin America has witnessed the growth of private armies, employed by the major oil companies, or by large landowners. In Colombia's Arauca Province, Occidental Petroleum maintains the Colombian Army's Eighteeth Brigade, 4,000 men strong, under what amounts to a privatization. In the Province of Uraba, the major planters have formed self-defense forces, who hunt down Communist guerillas without mercy.

Veritable paramilitary and security multinationals haveeven been created, such as "Executive Outcomes."[7] Headed by former members of the South African and British special forces (i.e., poachers turned game wardens), the company operates in 20 African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries, through some 50 (very discreet) subsidiaries. Depending on their customers' needs, "Executive Outcomes" and similar outfits train presidential bodyguards or local security forces; supervise them on the battlefield; monitor sensitive installations, oilfields, gold mines, and diamond mines; or protect the local elite, expatriates, or charitable organizations. They must be effective, swift, and discreet, which, in the turn, underscores the shortcomings of the local security forces. Often these companies are paid in kind, with part of whatever valuable item is extracted from the sites they are protecting, for example, further bolstering their economic power.

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[7] See Le Figaro of January 15, 1997, and U.S. News & World Report of January 20, 1997.

The reverse trend has also been observed, i.e., private interests, sometimes on theshady side, "sponsoring" armed gangs. In may 1997, seasoned Africa watchers revealed the financial dealings of Lebanese, Colombian, or Israeli "businessmen"close to the Ugandan Government. These representatives of gold and pecious stone cartels, or worse, used millions of dollars to bribe certain armed gangs loyal to Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who, in turn, were recruited from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eritrea.

n Armed Forces versus Bandits - Bandit Armies

• Armed Forces versus Bandits

In april 1997, Albania was plunged into anarchy. Bashkim Fino, the country's new Prime Minister,[8] branded organized crime, the mafias,as the main culprit. Hence, various military forces(French, Italian, etc.) found themselves assigned to perform humanitarian duties, to somehow quell the disorder - all the while confronting an invisible "enemy," hidden amidst the general populace - yet these soldiers do not know how their minds work, nor can they understand what goal they are pursuing, other than lining their pockets, of course.

In april 1997 in Mexico, where crime has skyrocketed since december 1994 financial crash, the chairman of the Confederation of Industrial Associations stated that "organized crime has outspaced any ability the official or private police forces might have to react." He demanded that henceforth the armed forces be engaged to fight the formidable mexican cartels, which is exactly what was done a month later.[9]

Is crime fighting by the armed forces, either domestically, or, occasionally, overseas, the exclusive domain of the army? Not any more. Navies will play an increasingly important policing role in the future. From 1995 to 1996, acts of piracy (thus reproted to the International Maritime Bureau; most such acts go unreported), rose from 187 to 224. The danger zone is located between Indonesia and South China. With the help of corruption, sometimes sizable cargoships (150 m and longer) have been boarded on the high seas, emptied of their wares, and resold, or scuttled. Merchants fleets are playing a growing role in drug trafficking too. In april 97, Japanese police seized 70 kilos of pure amphetamines, retailing for hundeds of millions of dollars, aboard the Northern Korean cargo ship Ji Song 2.

• The flip side : When Bandits Infiltrate the Armed Forces[10]

May 97 the 10th, the Frontier Post, an English-language daily from Peshawar, Pakistan, interviewed Air Marshal Ashgar Khan. A respected figure,[11] he stated that deceased dictator General Zia-ul-Haq used to transport shipments of heroin in his private aircraft. "It was Zia who started the contraband operation," Khan stressed. A month earlier, the pilot of a Pakistani military transport aircraft was arrested in New York when he sold two kilos of pure heroin, for the wholesale price of $160,000, to an FBI plainclothesman.

At the same time, Pakistani police arrested a known drug trafficker near the Rawalpindi airport. A former officer and ex-member of Pakistani secret services, Munawar Shah, was transporting two kilos of pure heroin, and samples of uranium (military grade, according to the local press). The drugs and uranium were on their way to another drug trafficker, Raja Altai, based in London.

n A New Situation in this Century, but One Without Precedent ?

War was not always what it has been in Europe for three centuries, i.e., army vs. army, state vs. state. Prompted by lofty political concerns, war in those days was noble, even sacred. After all, was it not God's means of deciding among nations ? Since the treaties of Westphalia[12] (1648, on dry land) and Utrecht (1713, focusing more on maritime matters), war has tended to be the exclusive preserve of nation-states,

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[8] 29,000 km2 and a population of three million, 10 percent of whom are heavily armed.

[9] Mexico militariza lucha contra la droga en la fontera norte, (Mexico Militarizes Counternarcotics Campaign along the Northern Border), La Opinion, May 16, 1997.

[10] The fact that all recent important incidents of this sort took place in Pakistan is purely coincidental. A month earlier, or later, similar cases could have happened in 30 other countries anywhere in the world.

[11] Asghar Khan was the first Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistani Air Force, then President of Pakistan Air Lines (PIA). Zia-ul-Haq died on August 17, 1988, when his private aircraft blew up, a crime that has not yet been solved.

[12] See Annexes on Westphalia and piracy.

wich conferred the monopoly over armed violence on armies or fleets that were carefully controlled, wore uniforms, and carried weapons that were clear for all to see.

In that kind of war, troops obeyed officers who were responsible for their actions. Where possible, the populace was kept away from the combat. It was forbidden to break truces, or to attack the wounded or prisoners. In short, armed forces back then saw themselves, and most often were, polar opposites of a large gang, a band of ruffians. International rules of warfare, formulated over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, were so firmly embedded in the Western mind that they were respected, and scrupulously so, by both sides during the 19th century's most famous and most significant civil war, the U.S. Civil War.[13]

Are the Consequences Purely Tactical?

Quite the opposite. The current upheavals have incalculable consequences, first and foremost for the military. Are nation-states losing their monopoly over armed violence? They actually have now lost it, as indicated above. What they have lost was one of key achievements of Renaissance Europe and the modern era, and the main tool designed by international law to abolish, insofar as possible, barbarity when man confronts his fellow man, is disappearing. This major invention of the modern age was to draw a sharp distinction between the enemy and the criminal. Now, violence is everywhere, and, moreover, the enemy is a criminal.

III - What Shoud Defense Play ?

Clearly, defense should play a major role, but on one condition : a clear understanding of the reality of today's world. At that price, the military will be able to deal with contemporary dangers. There is, in fact, a long tradition of studying and practicing indirect strategy whithin the armed forces. Remember, the Greek word stratos (army) gave us not only the world strategy but also the word stratagem

n What Should be Kept in Mind ?

• Idea 1. Thousands of precedents exist : the most advanced civilizations always prosper against a backdrop of chaos. Even in a stable phase of history, mankind is sometimes drawn under the spell of destruction, attracted by the abyss of annihilation. The calm prosperity of today's Europe should not be taken for granted.

• Idea 2. The basic political requirement for any community has remained unchanged since the dawn of history : its protection. An authority that is unable to protect, both within and beyond its territory, the life and property of its subjects does not retain their loyalty for long, and does not long survive. Furthermore, while nation-states were able to count on the patriotism of their citizens when these states confronted one another, this national loyalty is far from assured in a confusing brawl between nearly unidentifiable entities. Here, too, a word of caution. To quote Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great : where armies have trouble passing through, a donkey laden with gold slips in easily.

• Realism : The international law of warfare developed by the European powers two to three hundred years ago is not an immutable law of nature. The insidious notion by which armed violence that does not involve states is not war must be resolutely discounted. Nowadays, many of the most savage enemies of the law-governed state do not show us the courtesy of conforming to our rules. More and more, the new, threatening entities will be playing by their own rules, not ours. Does this mean a return to barbarity? Not necessarily, provided that the means are procured either to force these entities to respect a minimum set of rules, or to neutralize them for good. The annex below describes how the piracy that had beleaguered international trade for more than half a century was resolved in 10 years.

New Wars : What Are the New Cards on the Table ?

• Strategic Dimension. Since the warlords are basically entrepreneurs at heart, the bandenkriege do not follow the logic of a European-style war. Troop movements (or the lack thereof) are based not on tactical considerations, but, rather, on financial ones : seasonal trafficking, potential looting, controlling the harvest of narcotic plants, etc.

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[13] See Martin Van Creveld, The Transformation of War, The Free Press, New York, 1991.

• Disease Control Dimension. A 1997 report[14] by a french doctor on the health of soldiers in seven Central African armies revealed that 50 percent of them have AIDS or are HIV-positive.
• Characteristics of Chaotic Wars :
- More often than not, the conflicts are protacted, bloody, and painful;
- Non-recognition of the state or border by at least one of the two sides, owing to the waning on three continents of the concept of the nation-state with stable and controlled borders;
- End of the distinction between military and civilian, between the front and the rear; militias with something even vaguely resembling a uniform will become increasingly rare in the future;
- Complex human environment : the need to confront a scattered enemy, hidden among the populace, often mixed in with the armed forces;
- Absence of conventional battles in the open countryside, but continued massacres, bloody vendettas (Algeria, Chechnya, the former Yougoslavia), and series of terrorist episodes.
n New Wars : Where Are the Battlefields ?
The main battlefield in the decades to come could easily be the gaps in space and time :
• Battling in Uncontrolled Spaces :
Lawless zones, or "gray areas," i.e., areas lying between territories that are actually policed by genuine nation-states.
Areas that fall between the cracks of competing agency jurisdictions, or competing sectors in which these agencies operate, each from its own special perspective (narcotics, trafficking in humans, terrorism, smuggling, etc.). Does anyone in France truly see the big picture regarding the threat from a group such as the PKK, for example, the situation being even worse in countries with federal systems, where authority is fragmented among regions, as in Germany?
• Race Against Time
Dangerous, aggressive groups wielding high-tech equipment have a tremendous time advantage over slow, hulking states, paralyzed by administrative inertia and legalistic nit-picking.

IV - What Should Be Done ? First, Some Research

"The enemy frequently forces one to adopt a passive stance. The important thing in such cases is to retake the initiative quickly. If this cannot be done, defeat is inevitable."
Mao Zedong[15]
In chaotic warfare, technology does not play a decisive role, at least not on the ground. Faced with a real threat from hostile, unconventional groups, it thus seems reasonable not to commit all the assets at one's disposal to upgrading existing weapons and systems, which are already highly sophisticated, for the most part. We should also be thinking about the real dangers of today's world, and thus of basic research into tools, either totally new ones, or those adapted to today's threatening groups.

How Do We Counter an Enemy Whose Way of Thinking We Cannot Understand?
The first thing to be done is a political task, in the noble sense of the word : do some serious thinking about how to instill a bit of order into a world of ever increasing civil war, ethnic conflict, and confrontation motivated by religious or sectarian fanaticism. As in any strategy, this means understanding what rationale or logic the dangerous groups in today's world are using. If we know nothing of the "mindset" or the motives of our adversaries, how can we fight them ?
More simply stated, imagine a ship today without radar, without an instrument panel, reduced to sailing along blindly, with only a fog horn. This is how Europe is operating in 1997 as it confronts the dangerous groups in today's world. We have a hard time discerning them, know little about them, know next to nothing about what makes them tick, or about what frightens them. In Europe, the European Union bureaucrats knows how many seals there are in the Eastern Mediterranean, but they have no idea whether there are 500,000 heroin addicts in the EU, or double, or half that number.
Without basic math, computer science cannot advance. Without basic chemistry, pharmacology cannot advance. Similarly, particularly in our complex and chaotic world, without basic research into the real dangers of today's world, it is impossible to detect dangerous phenomena when they appear, or to analyze them, understand them, and, thus, to combat them.

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[14] "Strategic Old Thinking Doesn't Block a Virus," Jim Hoagland, Herald Tribune, April 3, 1997.

[15] Strategic Problems of Revolutionnary Warfare, December 1936.

How Does Counterinsurgency Work Today? The Indian Model

The concrete reality where dangerous groups now operate must therefore be studied. A short paper such as this can only offer some approaches. here is one :

Take, for example, the Indian Union, widely touted as the "world's biggest democracy." Like creaking Chinese junks, made of scraps of wood, but withstanding the toughest storms, India, always shaken by explosions, has, in the end, withstood every assault. Yet is there a country in the world with more guerilla groups, or a more varied mix of them? Tribal insurrections (Nagas and Bodos) in Manipur and Assam. Marxist-Leninist terrorism from the Naxalites in the northeast. Pro-independence Sikhs in Punjab. Islamic fundamentalists in Kashmir. Most of them financed with crime money, of course.

Imagine this drama played out within the European Union : the Armed Islamic Group, Hamas, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), the PKK, all unleashed at roughly the same time. It is not a miracle that India has managed to hold off such a tidal wave--quite the opposite. Over the past 20 years, the country's intelligence services have developped techniques that enable them to detect threats very early, and to tag and then manipulate the actors in guerilla or terrorist circles. Because they know their enemies well, the Indian intelligence services know how to mount sophisticated clandestine operations in wich they control, sometimes from the start, the groups that seem the most extreme, pitting their enemies against one another, weakening them, and sometimes destroying them from within.

Should not greats nations such ours study these techniques for dealing with new threats, like the ones developed by India, and then adapt them to their rules, and their own needs?

Annex 1 : The ThirtyYears' War and The Treaty of Westphalia

From 1618 to 1648, the great European powers (France, the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Empire, England, Sweden, Bavaria, the Netherlands, Denmark, etc.), tried to settle the great Catholic-Protestant quarrel once and for all. Germany, then a patchwork of mini-states, served as the main battlefield. Thirty years later, the country was absolutely devasted. Between one-third and one-half of the population perished (famine, massacres, disease), yet the outcome was indecisive, with neither religion in a position to dominate Europe completely.
After two years of endless palaver in Westphalia (in the cities of Münster and Osnabrück), European diplomats produced a shaky peace that pleased no one, least of all the Protestant and Catholic clergy, who, in unison for once, denounced it. Only France got something out of it and regained Alsace, and the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. The war was the last Europe-wide religious war; the era of national conflicts had begun.
Getting out of a war was not an easy task in those days. Sweden, for example, had to lay off 200,000 mercenaries (with families in tow--at that time, they went along with the troops), who all turned to looting and marauding. The frightening aftermath of that war prompted the European powers to form national armies.

Annex 2 : Piracy

There is a striking resemblance between our era and the period between the late 17th and early 18th centuries; 1650 to 1725, to be exact. An era of bipolar confrontation had come to an end, indirect strategies were widely employed, and politically-inspired groups were degenerating into criminal gangs. Piracy was actually born at the end of confrontation between two maritime blocs, a Catholic one (Spain and Portugal) and a Protestant one (England and the Netherlands). Before 1713 and the Treaty of Utrecht, privateering was clearly "political." Even in France, the most famous corsairs from La Rochelle - Levasseur, Legrand, and l'Ollonois[16] - were all diehard Calvinists, and attacked the fleets of Catholic Spain and France as irregulars on the protestant world front.

Even the raids of Henry Morgan against Spanish colonies (Panama in 1671, for example), were authorized by the Governor of Jamaica. Morgan was knighted by Charles II and received a 21-gun salute at his (official) funeral. Once the treaty of Utrecht was signed, the bipolar conflict essentially came to an end and privateering degenerated into piracy. In the Caribbean, the "gray area" of the time, buccaneers and "Frères de la côte" lost their political tags and began to pillage ships from any country, indiscriminately. In 1720, reports from the British admiralty mention 2,000 active pirates. From 1720 to 1730, 400 pirates were hanged outright. The harsh punishment was a powerful deterrent : by 1730, there were only 200 pirates left.

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[16] Jean-David Nau, aka "l'Ollonois," after his native Sables d'Ollones, aka " the Scourge of the Spaniards." He met an end worthy of a pirate when he was devoured by cannibals in the gulf of Darien (Panama). See "Under the black Flag : The Romance and Reality of life Among the Pirates", David Cordingly, Random House, New York, NY, 1995