

Terrorism, Anti-Terrorism and the Globalization of Insecurity

Since September 11 terrorism and the 'war on terror' have dominated the world's headlines. Yet, heinous crimes though they were, the attacks on New York, Washington and Bali can hardly be classed among the more violent conflagrations of the last ten years. In the Rwandan genocide some 800,000 people were butchered in the space of ten to twelve weeks, to which could be added the tens of thousands killed in Bosnia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. Nor can it be argued that terrorism is a new phenomenon. The use of terror as a political instrument has along history, and in its modern form can be traced back to the French Revolution. During *le Règne de la Terreur* (which introduced 'terror' into our political vocabulary) more than 300,000 suspects were arrested and more than 17,000 were executed.

What is it, then, about these recent crimes that has captured the world's attention when greater crimes have failed to do so? To put it simply, what is the strategic significance of the latest wave of terrorism? The fact that in this case the primary targets are the United States and its allies is no doubt part of the answer, as is the Islamic affiliation of the perpetrators of these crimes. For all that,

the war between the United States and militant Islam is hardly new. The record of the last twenty years makes this abundantly clear, and provides, therefore, essential context for the analysis that follows. Here it is enough to recall a few of the more dramatic episodes.

In the early 1980s, US personnel in Lebanon became targets of a series of attacks. The first occurred in April 1983, when a truck driven by a suicide bomber linked to Islamic Jihad exploded in the driveway of the US embassy in West Beirut. It killed sixty-three people, including seventeen Americans, and wounded one hundred, about forty of whom were Americans. In October 1983, Shia terrorists struck the United States Marines compound and the French Multinational Force headquarters in devastating, near simultaneous suicide bombing attacks. The assault on the US compound took 241 lives and wounded over one hundred. In September 1984, a suicide bomber attacked the new United States embassy building in East Beirut, killing eight and wounding dozens. On 14 June 1985, a TWA airliner was hijacked by members of the Shia-backed Hizballah organization, who demanded the release of Shia prisoners held in Kuwait, Israel and Spain. The tense stand-off lasting several days was finally broken through a series of complex and controversial political manoeuvres which saw thirty-nine hostages ultimately freed on 30 June. The following day, Israel announced that it was ready to release the Shia detainees from its prison. Then came the Lockerbie disaster in December 1988, soon followed by a series of other terrorist attacks. In 1993 a massive car bomb explosion at the World Trade Center in New York killed six and injured some one thousand people. In June 1996 a car bomb destroyed a cargo transport facility in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which housed US police and military personnel, killing nineteen and injuring 515. In November 1997, the Islamic Group carried out a mass shooting at a tourist attraction in Luxor, Egypt, killing sixty-two, most of whom were European and Japanese tourists. In August 1998, two US embassies came under car bomb attacks, resulting in eighty-seven and some 5,254 casualties respectively. In October 2000, a suicide attack on the destroyer USS Cole, which had briefly docked in Yemen, killed seventeen sailors and injured thirty.

Set against this backdrop, September 11 was neither new nor surprising. What made it unique was its scale, daring and symbolic choice of targets. More importantly, the continental territory of the United States had itself come under devastating attack. In this brief moment the United States lost its sense of invulnerability and as a consequence provided the most graphic demonstration yet of the *globalization of insecurity*. No amount of wealth, military muscle or technological prowess could erect an effective shield against the actions of desperate men. Insecurity could now be seen for what it

was — a pervasive malady from which no one would be immune, not even those located at the innermost core of American power. A bunch of terrorists of no fixed address inflicted on the United States the kind of consistently eluded the 'evil empire' during more than forty years of Cold War rivalry.

Of course, the symbolism of September 11 and its aftermath go far deeper. These attacks were aimed at the son of the man who had organized the coalition responsible for Desert Storm. September 11 was a catalytic moment at which Osama bin Laden, the son of a wealthy Saudi Arabian family closely associated with the Saudi regime, turned his motley band of warriors against the United States. To be more precise, he turned a group of Islamic martyrs against the American empire, and against the US president in particular. The irony of this encounter cannot be overstated. Here was a president intent on withdrawing from the world, or at least withdrawing from international commitments deemed inconsistent with redefined US interests. Washington, having abandoned any pretence of neutrality in the Israel-Palestine conflict, saw little value in continuing to support the 'peace process' in the Middle East. It was determined to abrogate the ABM treaty, undermine the Kyoto Protocol, oppose the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and generally weaken the UN's legitimacy and effectiveness. It had hitherto steadfastly refused to ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. All these steps had a common and clearly stated objective: to maximize America's freedom of 'unilateral' action. The most unilateralist US President since the Second World War was now met by the ultimate unilateralist, Osama bin Laden.

This personal encounter was, as we shall see, the outward but highly symbolic manifestation of a more profound structural contradiction between 'terror' and the 'war on terror', or to be more precise, between terrorism and anti-terrorism. To make sense of this unfolding contradiction or war, we need to ask a series of obvious yet often neglected questions: Who is waging war on whom? Why? And how?

To the first question one might offer a relatively straightforward answer, namely the one favoured by US official discourse. This is a war, we are told, which pits terrorists and terrorist groups the world over against a worldwide coalition led by the United States in defence of freedom and security. Regrettably, such a characterization of the protagonists raises more questions than it answers. Does the war on terror have in its sights Basque terrorists in Spain, Protestant and Republican terrorists in Northern Ireland, Hindu terrorists in India, or even Muslim terrorists in Algeria? In theory, yes, but in practice, no. Does it take aim at state-sponsored terrorism, whether sponsored by Libya, Iran, Iraq, China, Russia,

Israel, Turkey or Colombia? Clearly, the first three states are much more likely to be targeted than the last three. There is, in fact, no compelling evidence to support the claim that the US-led war on terror is directed against terrorism in all its forms. No serious attempt has been made at the level of declaratory policy — let alone operational policy -- to diagnose the terrorist virus in its various strains, much less to develop remedies that address the causes, as well as the symptoms of the disease. Might it be more accurate, then, to say that the war is aimed first and foremost against terrorists and terrorist groups that have attacked or are thought likely to attack US interests — most obviously, bin Laden and his followers, Al-Qaeda, its camps and networks? There is much to be said for this formulation, but it represents only one slice of a more complex reality.

While the notion of an all-encompassing war on terror must be treated with a grain of salt, it does not follow that the campaign is exclusively focused on Al-Qaeda or even on the larger network of terrorist groups that are in some way affiliated or connected with it. The simple fact that so much energy has been expended, despite the absence of corroborating evidence, on linking Saddam Hussein with Al Qaeda suggests a larger political agenda. The horror of September 11 has, in fact, been consistently used by Washington to justify an assault on 'radical', 'militant', 'fanatical' Islam. Political Islam is feared most obviously because of the destruction which a number of terrorist groups of Islamic inspiration have already inflicted, or might in future inflict, on the United States. It is also feared because it conjures up images of a more assertive Islamic world, of Islamic states and movements which, acting alone or in concert, might more effectively oppose US strategic, economic and political priorities. Libya, Iraq and Iran, though hardly acting in unison, have been troublesome enough. Viewed from the perspective of US hegemonic interests, the prospect of such militancy spreading to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or Indonesia must be too awful to contemplate.

On the other hand, any reasonably detached reading of global geopolitics would suggest that we are witnessing the gradual but painful rise of Islam as a major force in international life. Demography, geography, cultural inheritance and oil all point in this direction. By 2000 Islam could claim over 1.2 billion adherents and continuing vigorous growth, a significant presence in 184 countries, with major concentrations in Africa, Asia and South-eastern Europe and highly visible minorities in Western Europe. Islamic populations were located in some of the most strategically sensitive regions of the world, covering the entire southern half of the Mediterranean, virtually the whole of the Middle East, West Asia and Central Asia, and important parts of South and South-

East Asia. The Islamic world borders or encompasses key choke points, including the Strait of Gibraltar, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca and the various straits contained within or adjacent to the Indonesian archipelago. Nor could Muslims be unaware of the brilliant achievements of Islamic civilizations in science, medicine, philosophy, architecture, literature and the arts. The glories of the past associated with the courts of Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo, and the Safavid, Moghul and Ottoman empires, remain an integral part of contemporary Islamic culture.

To all this must be added the immense oil and gas reserves located within the Islamic world. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) presently accounts for 78.5 per cent of the world's proven crude oil reserves and well over 40 per cent of the world's gas reserves. Within OPEC the only substantial non-Muslim oil-rich country is Venezuela, which accounts for 9 per cent of OPEC reserves. Oil and gas constitute 60 per cent of world primary energy demand, and the OECD countries account for more than 60 per cent of that demand. In 2000 well over 70 per cent of OPEC oil exports were directed to the United States, Western Europe, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Middle Eastern oil may be accurately described as the lifeline that sustained Western industrialization and economic prosperity in the second half of the twentieth century.

Notwithstanding these impressive assets, the prevailing mood in the Arab and much of the Islamic world, whether in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan or Indonesia, is a profound sense of humiliation, bordering on seething discontent. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the analysis, the widely shared view, not least among the educated classes, is that the deficit between past glories and present-days squalor is attributable in no small measure to Western domination. The colonialist legacy appears to have been replaced or reinforced by the inequities of the present international trading, monetary and security systems. Much of Islamic frustration and anger, though directed against the West in general, is most sharply targeted on the United States, Israel and other close US allies. The growth of Islamic terrorism over the last thirty years is a symptom of this deeper ailment -- a tragic, criminal, intolerable symptom, but a symptom nonetheless. Set in this context, Islamic terrorism is but the most dramatic manifestation of an ailment which, if not treated at its core, could explode into even greater violence, and strike the death-knell of any prospect of healing.

The sources of Islamic discontent are not, of course, reducible to a single event, relationship or experience. Not surprisingly, the resulting grievances and demands also vary in complexion and

intensity depending on time and place. It is nevertheless possible to identify a number of recurring themes in the Islamic critique of US hegemonic objectives. Of these, the first and most obvious is the widespread denunciation of US economic, political and military support for Israel. In Arab eyes in particular, the tendency of successive US administrations, even those that have shown a degree of sympathy for the Palestinian cause, has been to guarantee Israel's security and military supremacy in the Middle East while turning a blind eye to its nuclear weapons capability and brutal use of force against Palestinian targets. The failure of the United States to use the enormous leverage at its disposal to moderate Israeli policies and actions is seen as evidence of Washington's diplomatic bias, duplicity and clear preference for outcomes that perpetuate Arab inferiority.

Another important grievance relates to the depressed economic conditions — widespread poverty, high unemployment, low levels of education and health care — which are the lot of most Islamic countries, not only in the Middle East but in much of North Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia. The generally poor economic performance of Muslim societies has inevitably given rise to intense debate as to its causes, and in particular to the relative importance of domestic and external influences. It can hardly be denied that internal political processes and practices, in particular institutionalized forms of corruption, clientelism and mismanagement have been major contributing factors. The public perception, however, in many parts of the Islamic world, is that corrupt and authoritarian regimes often rely for their survival on Western support, with governments, business groups and international organizations serving as the principal conduits of Western power. Included in this category are the regimes that have held sway for the last thirty years in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, Suharto's Indonesia, and now Musharraf's Pakistan and Karzai's Afghanistan.

Given their dependence on external sources of support, including military aid and large-scale arms transfers, most oil-rich countries have been prepared to guarantee the West secure and cheap access to oil supplies without exercising the full leverage that adroit use of the oil weapon might confer. Considerations of regime survival have made the ruling elites of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates far more compliant than they might otherwise be. In any case, the degree of leverage derived from large oil reserves must not be overstated, given that the West retains a high degree of control over refining, distribution and financial arrangements. Outside of their own borders, OPEC countries owned in 2000 less than 8 per cent of the world's crude refining capacity, much of which was under the firm control of the oil majors. In the same year OPEC accounted for less than 4 per

cent of the world's tanker fleet. In a real sense oil power continued to reside with such household names as Exxon/Mobil, BP, Shell, Chevron, Total Fina, ENI, Elf and Texaco and the large industrial and financial networks with which they were closely associated.

One other source of profound discontent merits close attention. In Muslim eyes, much of Western practice and discourse constitutes an affront to religious sensibility. A striking example is the cavalier attitude taken by Westerners, including many in high places, to the Holy month of Ramadan. The willingness of US administrations to launch military raids against Islamic countries during this period of fast and prayer is widely interpreted as a calculated and provocative insult to the Islamic faith. Even more offensive is the stationing of US military facilities and *personnel* on Arab/Islamic soil which, especially in Saudi Arabia, is considered tantamount to desecration of Islam's holiest places. In this highly charged atmosphere in which multiple sources of discontent combine and interact, a widely shared Islamic consciousness has gradually taken root. Notwithstanding the many doctrinal, ideological, geopolitical and economic divisions within the Islamic commonwealth, the West is widely perceived as contemptuous of the richness and integrity of the Islamic tradition, and as bent on stereotyping and demonizing the other — a mindset that is thought to colour not only relations with Islamic states but even attitudes to Muslim communities in seemingly pluralist, tolerant Western societies.

What, then, of the war on terror? Who are the principal protagonists on this side of the battle lines? Despite loose talk of multilateral solutions and global coalitions, it is clear that the war on terror is not first and foremost the work of the United Nations or any of its agencies. No internationally mandated court or tribunal has carriage of the campaign. One year after September 11 the international anti-terrorist coalition appeared distinctly thin. Its membership, specific objectives and decision-making processes were at best vague and elusive. Immediately after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, NATO assumed a prominent role, at least rhetorically. It invoked Article 5, something that it had not previously done, even at the height of the Cold War. Why? Presumably because the proposed involvement of most NATO members would amount to little in practice. Aside from the United States and Britain, few NATO forces would engage in direct combat with the Taliban or Al Qaeda. The vast majority of Washington's NATO allies invoked Article 5 expecting their military contribution to the war in Afghanistan or to any subsequent war in Iraq or elsewhere to be minimal.

None of this is to say that countries of Western Europe or Canada were not concerned by the terrorist threat, that they were

not prepared to take vigorous steps to reduce the threat within their borders, or that they were unwilling to work with the United States to enhance communication and co-operation between their respective police, intelligence, customs and financial agencies. Such collaboration was not, however, understood as constituting a global assault on militant Islam. The European Union generally, and the French and German governments in particular, remain highly suspicious of US intentions and unimpressed by the skill of US diplomacy. They view their relationship with the Islamic world through quite different lenses, and are intent on pursuing a diplomatic agenda that is often at variance with that of the United States. A sharp conflict of interests is emerging with respect to Iraq and Middle East policy more generally, with far-reaching implications for both international trade and energy policy.

Other allies of the United States, including Australia, Pakistan and the Philippines, did indicate a willingness to accept US leadership of the war on terror, but even here the motives were at best mixed and the involvement highly qualified. The Musharraf government saw its alignment with the United States as a convenient strategy designed to strengthen its hold on power and its bargaining position *vis-à-vis* India. As for the Philippines, this was an ideal opportunity to deal more effectively with the running sore of militant Islamic separatism in Mindanao. Putin's Russia made sympathetic noises about a global anti-terrorist campaign, but its primary focus was the unresolved war in Chechnya and its determination to designate Chechnyan separatism as another form of terrorism. Moscow, it seems, is prepared to extend to the US anti-terrorist campaign just enough support to induce the United States to turn a blind-eye to the way Moscow deals with Chechnya and other Muslim-inspired threats in its immediate neighbourhood. Much the same strategic calculus has been made by Beijing, which is faced with Uighur Muslim separatism in Xinjiang province, and shares with Russia a strong interest in thwarting the rise of Islamist movements and governments in Central Asia.

There is, then, little evidence to suggest that many governments are about to fall in behind US global priorities and strategies, much less to do the dirty work that a global military campaign would necessarily entail. We are now perhaps better placed to answer the question: Who is waging war against whom? A number of Islamic groups and networks, centred on the Middle East but with tentacles reaching to every part of the Muslim world and to most Western societies, have decided that the reassertion of Islamic values and interests cannot be effectively pursued in the current geopolitical environment without reliance on the use of force. Given the awesome fire-power that is arrayed against them, they have made the strategic assessment, however ethically or

politically misguided that assessment may be, that the terrorist weapon, precisely because it is aimed at soft targets, is the one that can most effectively exploit the vulnerability of the opponent. Although only a minute fraction of Muslim believers have joined the ranks of militant Islamist organizations or approve of their tactics, the fact remains that the grievances, objectives and demands as articulated by the leaders of these organizations, and the sacrifices their followers are prepared to make, have struck a responsive chord in much of the Muslim world. US policy makers and the strategic and economic interests they represent have therefore set out to destroy what they perceive as the terrorist threat. This involves the physical destruction of terrorist organizations of Islamic provenance, but also the infliction of exemplary punishment on those who harbour, finance or in any way support them. What is deeply disturbing to the US hegemonic project is not simply the physical threat to which civilian populations are now exposed, but the possibility that the message preached by terrorist organizations will embolden other actors within the Muslim world to pursue more assertive policies inimical to US interests. Particularly troubling for Washington is the prospect that friendly or allied regimes in various parts of the Muslim world will either be toppled or begin to desert the US camp.

In identifying, at least in broad outline, the key players in this intensifying war, I hope to have also shed light on the two related questions: the why and how of this contest. Here I propose to focus, though all too briefly, on the ambitions and strategies that underpin the actions of the US hegemon. The present US administration, and in particular the key figures who have had the ear of the US president (Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, Wolfowitz, Pearle), appear to have concluded that the events of September 11 present both risks and opportunities. Despite the vulnerabilities inherent in the globalization of insecurity, US planners have sought to use the attacks on New York and Washington and subsequent terrorist threats as a lever with which to enhance the credibility and legitimacy of US leadership. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the persistent efforts of the Bush administration to strike a devastating blow against Iraq.

The US concern is not so much that Saddam Hussein poses now, or will soon pose, a direct military threat to US security. In all probability Saddam has no useable nuclear weapons capability, negligible capacity to deploy chemical or biological weapons, and very little incentive to use what he has, save in a desperate act of retaliation. What makes Saddam anathema to US political and economic elites are three rather different considerations: the fact that Iraq controls 10 per cent of OPEC's oil reserves and that, given a free hand, he may use them in ways calculated to damage US

interests; the possibility that, by force or persuasion, he may acquire effective control over additional oil reserves — the war with Iran and the annexation of Kuwait are interpreted in this light; and the dangerous, not to say explosive, precedent that might be set by an Arab leader thumbing his nose at US power and getting away with it. That so much venom should be directed against Saddam, when his regime is weaker and the terrorist threat stronger than ever before, demonstrates the decisive role these three considerations have assumed in US official thinking. Washington appears to have adopted a strategic posture that brooks no opposition in the Middle East or other strategic regions in which Islam remains a potent force. It is intent on opposing, thwarting and, where possible, unseating any government, regime or coalition that, regardless of its secularist or religious inclinations, could one day acquire significant control over large oil reserves, or pursue assertive policies liable to puncture US strategic pre-eminence and the aura of invincibility so assiduously cultivated in the year of 'unipolarity'.

There is, however, more to Washington's revised strategic posture than this relatively simple calculus suggests. The 'war on terror' or, as I prefer to label it, the politics of anti-terrorism, is but the latest in a succession of strategic steps taken by the Bush administration to strengthen the foundations of US hegemony. Partly in response to the challenges posed by the rise of Western Europe and China, and potentially a resurgent Islam, the United States is seeking to recreate the kind of polarity that prevailed during the Cold War. Communism and anti-communism have been replaced by terrorism and anti-terrorism; the 'evil empire' by the 'axis of evil'. The aim is essentially the same: to divide the world into two camps — 'you are with us or against us' — and to portray the United States and its friends as the repository of all that is good, while depicting the opponent as the personification of the demonic or the barbaric. Demons, be it Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden or Ayatollah Ali Kameini, are vital to the success of the strategy, for their evil words and deeds provide the justification for the 'extraordinary measures' needed to guarantee the peace. Though no single actor can be portrayed as the seemingly monolithic embodiment of evil, as was the case with Stalinism, lesser rogues are not hard to find. To the extent that they are prepared to commit unspeakable crimes, or to acquire, or be thought likely to acquire weapons of mass destruction, rogues can assume demonic proportions. A number of steps can then follow, if not logically, then at least with a degree of emotive appeal. In the name of 'justice', 'freedom' and 'compassion' the United States and its allies can greatly expand their military arsenals, shower wholesale destruction on opposing military and civilian targets (in

Afghanistan today, in Iraq tomorrow), and introduce draconian due process violations and secret arrests.

To put it simply, but not inaccurately, the bifurcation of the world provides a platform on which the United States can stage a renewed bid for global supremacy, offering to protect those who accept US leadership, and threatening to punish those who stand in the way. The war on terror may therefore be understood as a useful ideological and strategic tool in the delicate task of alliance management and coalition building. In this complex operation the administration needs all the support it can get. At home, it may turn to security and intelligence agencies, large financial and industrial interests, media proprietors, propagandists, bigots of various kinds. Abroad, it may have to do business with corrupt or repressive governments, and even countenance dealings with shadowy figures in the underworld of transnational crime. The decisive criterion of collaboration is whether or not a particular player can materially or rhetorically contribute to the war on terror, and to the polarization of international discourse on which it rests. Once the ideological and psychological groundwork has been prepared, unauthorized military intervention, pre-emptive strikes and even the possible first use of nuclear weapons become imaginable instruments of policy.

To elaborate a grand design is one thing; to gain support for it is another; to bring it to fruition another still. Even only one year after its official proclamation the 'war on terror' is in considerable difficulty. That Osama bin Laden has thus far evaded capture is not the issue. Indeed, for purposes of demonization he may be more valuable alive than dead. While severely weakened, the Al Qaeda networks have not been destroyed. Judging from developments in Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and South-East Asia, the indications are that the terrorist push continues to gain impetus. There is, in any case, no single terrorist organization, network, movement or master plan. The trend, a particularly worrisome one, is towards decentralization and continuing proliferation of groups and initiatives, representing the multiplicity and diversity of discontents. There is little to support the view that the physical elimination of actual or suspected terrorists can proceed with sufficient speed or precision to stem the flow of new recruits. Given that martyrdom is a central plank of this latest wave of terrorist mobilization, it is difficult to see how the infliction of pain or death can be a decisive deterrent. Indeed, to the extent that Osama bin Laden and his followers can point to the extraordinary reaction they have provoked on the part of the world's only superpower, they can already claim a kind of success that has eluded others nursing similar grievances but committed to more conventional strategies. The main casualty of the present confrontation may be the politics of moderation.

The US hegemonic project is at the same time encountering other potentially more debilitating obstacles. The world's superstate can most efficiently bring its awesome military might to bear on the problem by directing it against other states. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the war on terror should have so quickly turned to war on Afghanistan and threatened war on Iraq. Highly sophisticated military hardware and software, let alone nuclear weaponry, does not so easily lend itself to use against small, decentralized terrorist cells spread across the four corners of the globe, many of them located in densely populated conurbations, including major Western cities. The next best thing is to turn the pressure on those states which are thought to harbour or support terrorist groups; but as the last twelve months have shown, applying such pressure, whether in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or Indonesia, does not guarantee success. Indeed, the state-centric strategy may prove counterproductive, either provoking even greater popular hostility, or destabilizing a friendly regime, or worse still, producing some combination of the two outcomes.

In the longer term, the geopolitical equation threatens to turn increasingly to Washington's disadvantage. What are the most likely implications of the present US strategic and diplomatic posture for relations with European allies, on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other? The single-minded preoccupation with essentially reactive and often unilateral responses to terrorism and the actions of rogue states has already had two clearly discernible consequences. So far as NATO is concerned, it has greatly eroded its *raison d'être*. US allies, save for Britain, have increasingly come to the conclusion that NATO is little more than an appendage of US policy, and that its meetings, supposedly designed to provide a consultative forum for the discussion of strategic questions of common concern, has in practice degenerated into a platform consistently used by the United States to push for its latest unilateral decisions, be they withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, adoption of the pre-emptive strike doctrine, or military action in Afghanistan. The politics of enlargement and the increasingly visible attempts to make room for a Russian presence within NATO have merely served to remove from contention the single major threat that had previously provided NATO with its overriding sense of purpose. US unilateralism may not have yet produced a united and sustained European response, but it has greatly weakened among European policy makers respect for US leadership and engendered public disenchantment on a scale and at a level of intensity not seen since the end of the Second World War. Relations with Moscow and Beijing may give an impression of relative calm, but the reality is more one of simmering friction only partially and temporarily obscured by the apparent marriage of convenience on the issue of terrorism. Both the Russians and the

Chinese have been clever enough to exact a high financial and diplomatic price while offering at best guarded support for the international campaign against terrorism. In relation to Afghanistan and now Iraq, they have played either a spoiling role or sat on the fence, content to watch the United States expend immense energies and resources in a war of only loosely defined objectives and largely unpredictable outcomes. The full extent of the financial, military and geopolitical costs of the politics of 'anti-terrorism' will not be known for some time, but it is likely to be much greater than most leading US planners would care to imagine.