The Endless "War on Terror," or How America exposed Itself

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-If there's anything that the ten years of the "war on terror" have demonstrated, it's that the world leader is incredibly isolated. America is stubbornly and methodically trying to impose its own designs on a desperately recalcitrant world.

For a few days in September 2001, the whole world was watching the CNN video footage of the falling twin towers, accompanied by a general mood that resonated with the mobilizing headline, "America under Attack." Later, President George W. Bush began what came to be known as "the war on terror."

In its fight against the evil of al-Qaeda, America launched two genuine wars, several permanent combat operations ("initiatives") and endless actions against the leaders of the international terrorist underground.

The world is growing accustomed to fighting with no front line, a situation whereby the next strike could come at any time and from anywhere, whether from terrorists or from fighters that are against them. A new world order is taking shape before our eyes, but the vision of its architects remains unclear.

Throw them out the door, and they'll come back in through the window

A decade after 9/11, al-Qaeda has not been defeated but strong pressure on its top has gradually weakened their vertical links and has led to the formation of a number of independent regional affiliates.

While the Americans were closely watching every careless step by Osama bin-Laden, and Russia was engaged in stubborn fighting against the extremists that had become all too active in the North Caucasus in the late 1990s, the Yemeni terrorist clan grew considerably in strength. Now that President Hosni Mubarak has been overthrown, Egyptian terrorists can also breathe a sign of relief.

Al-Qaeda is becoming increasingly active in the Maghreb countries, as well as the former Algerian Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat – an armed wing of Algerian Islamists that operates in Sahel and is disturbing North African rulers.

Al-Qaeda, which is built on the principles of maximum dispersion of terrorist networks, is working to completely eliminate hierarchical rule and to move on to an "umbrella brand." The brainchild of bin Laden intends to outlive its founder by many years. It has already nearly become a heap of disparate groups that are practically independent of the

conditional center, but profess basically the same values.

The dismal wave raised by religious extremists is meeting with an unpleasant response from Washington. The format of responding to the challenges of "the terrorist international" is more or less clear, but even the Americans have not yet decided what to do about the world's growing discontent with their arbitrary actions.

Drawing fire upon itself

America's intense struggle against terrorism has been followed by a long tail of scandals that concern the most diverse aspects of the world order. This includes general categories, such as interference in internal affairs and the invasion undertaken to eliminate non-existent weapons of mass destruction, as well as specific episodes such as torture in the Abu Ghraib prison or crimes by Blackwater contractors.

At first, America's unceremonious conduct evoked venomous humor about its random strikes at unidentified terrorists. When it became clear that this was a long-term policy, these jokes gave way to dull irritation, which led to justifiable apprehensions on the part of countries that were not protected by the U.S. umbrella and were unable to defend themselves against outside interference. Washington seemed to be exposing itself to threats by attracting the attention of its enemies from around the world.

Then, the second echelon of criticism came forward. When the crimes of private law-enforcement agencies started to be revealed, when the world learned of the events in Guantanamo and the CIA's secret prisons in Eastern Europe, the chorus of opponents was joined by domestic human rights advocates and simply a skeptical press and public. The more obvious it became how many sacrifices had been made in the fight against terrorism, the more pressure was brought to bear on Washington.

Now the whole pack is following the alpha male's pattern of behavior. France and Britain have ostentatiously created their own Iraq in Libya and are now starting to come face to face with developments that may compel them to establish a "multilateral security force" in the former Jamahiriya, thereby drawing more criticism, mainly at home.

The "war on terror" as a source of profit

In early September the public learned about a report by the bipartisan Congressional Wartime Contracting Commission, which found that overall spending on contracts and grants to support U.S. operations, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan, is expected to exceed $206 billion by the end of the 2011 budget year. The commission estimated that at least $30 billion and possibly as much as $60 billion has been squandered there over the past decade as a result of incompetence, poor planning and corruption.

The report touched upon one of the White House's most sensitive issues of the last decade: the active involvement of private military corporations in "outsourcing" some of the functions that were traditionally carried out by government law-enforcement agencies. The commission focused on finances alone: isn't it too extravagant to maintain one contractor per one government employee (in all, there are 260,000 private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan)?

But there is also a different dimension to this issue, which has led to heated debates

(including discussions in UN profile working groups) on the boundaries of legitimacy and the responsibilities of this private military business. These debates also tried to address the difference between private contractors and ordinary mercenaries, which were strictly banned after their escapades in Africa in the 1960s and 70s.

Countries that are leading active operations in the Third World are unlikely to give up their contractors – for one, they lack sufficient manpower for all their operations, and further, it's not always appropriate to run into certain adventures waving a national flag. It is possible to fight against private military business as much as they want, but it was the "war on terror" that uncovered the demand of government agencies for these services.

Of course, the golden age of these contractors has come to an end. In Iraq, even rank-and-file soldiers easily raked in up to $1,000-$1,500 per day, whereas far from all of their colleagues in the U.S. army received that much for even a week of immaculate service in combat zones.

The economic crisis continues, and more manpower has become available (in part because of the many army servicemen that are fleeing to private business). As a result, prices will go down but business will stay on…

Familiar slogans

In the 1990s every publication was writing about the crises of the Yalta system, and later on of the Westfall system. Criticism, reflections and lamentations accompanied every U.S. operation in the post-bipolar world.

But it was this "war on terror" that has become the first truly stable and functional military-political technology that is close to putting an end to the sacred inviolability of national sovereignty that has been ingrained in the minds of statesmen and common people for centuries.

It has already taken root and offers a convenient excuse for launching all kinds of undertakings that in the former lexicon of international relations would be unequivocally interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries.

The permanence of the "war on terror" is a consequence of the vague criteria for victory against a background of seemingly obvious motivations. Slogans about "a mounting terrorist threat" sound almost as familiar as the old theses about the "further intensification of class struggle." It is not quite clear why this threat is mounting and when it will be eliminated, but it is obvious that we need to prepare for a worst-case scenario.

In effect, this is a kind of a tug boat that is pulling against the inertia of the tremendous mass of international law, away from its familiar harbor, out in the stormy open seas, forced to navigate without a clear destination.

In this sense, America has exposed itself for a third time by acting not only as an opponent of international extremism but also by infringing upon human rights and freedoms, in their Euro-Atlantic understanding, and by encroaching on the foundations of the world order, the formation of which it had once largely contributed to.

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http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/messages

Stop NATO website and articles:
http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com

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