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A charitable organization, founded in 2001, CDFAI develops and disseminates materials and carries out activities to promote understanding by the Canadian public of national defence and foreign affairs issues. We are developing a body of knowledge to be used for Canadian policy development, media analysis and educational support. Our network of distinguished Canadian Fellows supports CDFAI by authoring research and policy papers.

Mission Statement

To be a catalyst for innovative Canadian global engagement.



Canadian Defence
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Article Summaries from the Assistant Editor

Terrorism and Canada: An Assessment Ten Years After 9/11

Gavin Cameron argues that domestic terrorism is declining in many countries, including Canada, and that we are not witnessing a new phase in the struggle against terrorism, but an actual waning of jihadist terrorism.

The Decline of the American Empire?

John Ferris states that the American economy and its position in western Asia are both eroding and any action to alleviate one problem will worsen the other. Nevertheless, the US, he argues, still has strength, will and wisdom to solve these problems.

Libya: A Victory with Asterisks

Roland Paris argues that the revolution's success in Libya is a qualified one for both the Libyan rebels and NATO allies. He also contends that the Libyan intervention may have been the first and last major Responsibility to Protect intervention authorized by the UN.

"Crowdsourcing" Policy Development

Gordon Smith contends there has been a major shift in the way the Canadian government system works and therefore think tanks, including CDFAI, need to shift their target audience from the public service to ordinary citizens and the opinion leaders who influence them.

The Return of the Ottoman Empire à la Erdoğan?

Cameron Ross suggests that the perception that Erdoğan is thrusting Turkey into emerging power status is premature in light of troubling domestic economic developments and still unresolved Kurdish issues.

The Terrorist Threat Ten Years After 9/11

Aurélié Campana argues that while much has been said and written about al-Qaeda around the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, terrorism actually has multiple faces and evolves in the same way our societies do. She outlines three important evolutions of terrorism since 9/11.

Thinking Creatively about Taiwan

David Wright examines China's progression to a republic and the resulting destruction of Taiwanese independence. He concludes that Taiwan may never enjoy full independence, but DFAIT should be able to figure out a way to creatively assert Taiwan's democracy and recognize its respect for human rights.

Limited War in Support of Unlimited Aspirations: A New Variant of a Forgotten Controversy

Denis Stairs discusses the historical effects of wars and the gradual acceptance of proportional military response. He cautions, however, that we must be increasingly aware of when and where military commitments are made.

Much Ado about Nothing? The 2011 Uprisings and Relations Between the West and the Arab World

Marie-Joëlle Zahar supplies a mid-course assessment of the impact of the Arab Spring. She suggests that early fears of regional instability were exaggerated and that Western-Arab relations remain mostly unchanged.

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Message from the Editor-in-Chief



Written by:
David Bercuson

The announcement by the United States Department of State that a decision to allow construction of the Keystone XL pipeline project to connect the Alberta Oil Sands to the US Gulf

Coast will be postponed at least until 2013 ought to be a reminder to Canadians to continue to seek non-US markets for Canadian products. No one can be sure if the pipeline will receive US permission even in 2013; the Harper government must now do all in its power to push ahead with plans to move crude to the west coast to serve China and other non-US markets. It was once claimed that Canada today is an energy “superpower”, but a CDFAI study completed in 2007 by Dr. Anette Hester pointed out that Canada is so dependent on the US market that it has virtually no leverage what-so-ever in persuading Americans to make decisions that would serve the interests of both countries.¹ The Keystone pipeline delay is proof positive of her conclusions.

The State Department claims the delay was not politically motivated, but such claims simply lack any credibility. With Democrats in serious trouble in the already started 2012 race for the House, Senate and the presidency, the environmental lobby is a factor that the president believes he must keep on side since the nation’s shaky economic foundation and high unemployment rate have put him squarely behind the eight ball.

No one in Canada should blame American politicians for acting like American politicians. If the tables were turned – and they have been in the recent past on, for example, Canadian support for ballistic missile defence – Ottawa politicians would act like Ottawa politicians. As one US congressman was once supposed to have said to another; “if you want a friend in Washington, get yourself a dog.” This is a lesson that Canadians need to constantly re-learn.

The answer is not for Canada to appeal to sentiment when struggling against local interests (Nebraskans were strongly opposed to the pipeline running through their state), but to set up circumstances where even a US president can see that dismissing a vital Canadian initiative runs counter to US national interests. Had

Canada already had the ability to send millions of barrels of crude to the west coast to serve non-US markets, Canada would have had the leverage to advance the Keystone pipeline to the construction stage before 2012.

The US is Canada’s closest friend and ally and likely always will be, but Canadian trade needs non-US outlets. Canada is already some 10% less dependent on the US market than it was a decade ago. This small shift in Canadian trade came about in part because of the thickening of the border after 9/11, but mostly because the demands of rising markets in China and elsewhere have drawn Canadian products while the US has had a somewhat rocky decade, especially since the melt-down of 2008. Canada needs to continue to diversify its markets. But in the crucial energy sector, no real diversification has occurred for the simple reason that diversification is literally impossible without physical outlets to one or both coasts for Canada’s oil and natural gas.

Building a high capacity pipeline from Alberta to the west coast is an urgent and overriding Canadian national interest. It will take many years to do so, and many legitimate concerns of local groups will have to be addressed, but the project must go ahead if for no other reason than the Keystone debacle must never be repeated. Canadian economic health must be safeguarded as much as possible from Washington’s political swamps and the partisan dangers that lurk there.

¹ To read the full report visit <http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/Canada%20as%20The%20Emerging%20Superpower.pdf>

David Bercuson is the Director of Programs at CDFAI, the Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, and the former Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the 41st Combat Engineer Regiment.

Terrorism and Canada: An Assessment Ten Years After 9/11



Written by:
Gavin Cameron

Ten years after September 11, 2001, it is worth examining the state of terrorism, both within Canada and internationally. The past year has seen some significant shifts in the dynamics

of the issue which should give rise to consideration of whether jihadist terrorism generally, and that of al-Qaeda more specifically, is on the wane, or whether we are simply witnessing a new phase in a continuing struggle.

The international terrorism picture has arguably witnessed more change in 2011 than in any year since the start of the Iraqi insurgency in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. Although the success of the Arab Spring has been uneven, changes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are contributing to a fundamentally different political atmosphere in the Middle East. The US combat mission in Iraq ended in August 2010 and US forces are scheduled to withdraw from the country at the end of 2011. Canada ended its combat mission in Kandahar in July 2011 and the remaining Canadian forces have assumed a training role with the Afghan National Security Forces. The year also witnessed the killing in May of Osama bin Laden and in September of Anwar al-Awlaki, a degradation of the inspirational strength of the al-Qaeda movement as a whole and the operational strength of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), respectively. Finally, the Islamist al-Shabaab's control of southern Somalia has recently come under increased pressure from renewed offensives by the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Transitional Federal Government.

Recent studies from both the United States and United Kingdom have questioned whether the domestic threat in these countries is rising, contrary to widespread assertions. Although there has been a steady flow of plots and arrests in each country since 2001, there is little evidence that the domestic threat within the US is increasing and significant evidence that the threat within the UK is actually decreasing. This past June, for example, Britain's domestic security intelligence organization, MI5, lowered its threat assessment within the country from "severe" to "substantial". At first glance, the Canadian experience appears to contradict the apparent

trend in the UK. Although the Toronto-18 case of 2006 remains the best known of the post-9/11 plots within the country, there have been both subsequent threats and the involvement of Canadians in plots or campaigns elsewhere. Said Namouh, arrested in 2007 and given a life sentence, was affiliated with the Global Islamic Media Front and linked to bomb threats against German and Austrian targets. In August 2010, the Ottawa-3, Misbahuddin Ahmed, Hiva Alizadeh and Khurram Sher, were arrested and accused of plotting attacks in Ottawa and Montreal. Also in 2010, Mohammed Warsam pled guilty to assisting al-Qaeda. Sayfildin Tahir Sharif is currently appealing an extradition request from the United States relating to allegations that he provided material support to two suicide attacks against the US military in Iraq in the spring of 2009. In March 2011, Mohammed Hersi was detained as he left Canada, allegedly planning to join al-Shabaab in Somalia. In the same month, Ferid Ahmed Imam and Maiwand Yar were connected to a plot to attack the New York subway system in 2009. In June, Tahawwur Rana was convicted in Chicago on charges of providing assistance to Lashkar-e-Taiba and plotting an attack against the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten; however, determining the severity of a threat from so few incidents is open to miscalculation. Arrests may be indicators of police or intelligence success rather than societal failure; a single incident with multiple participants



Photo Source: thestar.com

threatens to skew any threat assessment that is based largely on arrests; and, conversely, even multiple detentions of individual extremists may indicate success rather than failure, if it is determined that each was forced

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to operate as a “lone wolf” because they could not find a jihadist group in which to participate. James Brandon has attributed this decreasing threat in the UK to a series of factors, including the efficiency of the security services, the decline of gateway organizations that facilitate radicalization, and the decreasing susceptibility of the UK Islamic population to jihadist arguments. These factors apply equally to Canada as to the UK and it is probable that the trend will only increase, reflecting the sum of the wider factors noted already.

It would be rash to suggest that the post-9/11 struggle against terrorism is nearing an end. In Pakistan alone, numerous groups continue to operate, from the remnants of the internationalist al-Qaeda, to those focused on the overthrow of the Pakistani government, to the specifically Kashmir-motivated Lashkar-e-Taiba. Nor is this an argument yet for rolling back some of the security measures that remain from the past ten years since these measures have contributed to a decline in domestic terrorism in countries such as the UK and Canada. Nevertheless, the international terrorism scene appears more hopeful for countries such as Canada than at any point in the past ten years and it is plausible that these developments will extend further to Canada’s domestic situation over time.

Dr. Cameron received his Ph.D in 1998 from the University of St. Andrews. He is an Associate Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS).

CDFAI and Social Media

Over the past year CDFAI has branched out into the world of New Media. Our online presence has grown substantially through the use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and our Blog. The 3Ds Blog, moderated by Jack Granatstein, provides important, up to the minute commentary on issues relating to defence and foreign affairs. If you would like to contribute to the blog please send your submissions to contact@cdfai.org. We want to hear from you.

You can also join the conversation by visiting our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/CDFAI> or following us on Twitter @CDFAI. You can also find us on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/company/canadian-defence-and-foreign-affairs-institute>.

Thank you for your support. With your help we look forward to continuing to raise the level of debate around issues of diplomacy, defence and development in Canada.



The Decline of the American Empire?



Written by:
John Ferris

When declaring his decision to withdraw all American forces from Iraq by 1 January 2012, President Barack Obama said, “the United States is moving

forward from a position of strength”. Its war in Iraq over, “the nation that we need to build – and the nation that we will build – is our own”. A leading Republican, Mitt Romney, retorted that the “astonishing failure to secure an orderly transition in Iraq has unnecessarily put at risk the victories that were won through the blood and sacrifice of thousands of American men and women”.¹ Both men are right, in part. The American economy and its position in western Asia are eroding. Any steps to solve one of these problems will increase the other. Some sacrifices have been in vain.

The United States is caught in the mouth of scissors. One blade consists of the greatest economic difficulties it has experienced since 1939. The absence of fast and simple solutions to them is honing an edge for the politics of defence. The imperatives of public finance, and the attitudes of liberals, conservatives and the public, combine to push Americans away from intervention abroad, and the maintenance of forces able to execute such actions. These pressures find a focus on the military budget. They are reinforced by a stalemate in politics, which will last for years, no matter which party temporarily takes any election. By making the protection of entitlement programmes, and the avoidance of tax hikes, their first priorities, in effect both Democrats and Republicans are volunteering the military for cuts. At present, the military is preparing to absorb \$450 billion in reductions over the next decade, averaging some 6.4% of its budget during the 2011 financial year, of \$708 billion.² Further cuts are on the cards for the same reason banks are robbed: that’s where the money is. If Congress fails this month to agree on how to reduce the federal deficit, for example, defence budgets will automatically fall by another \$600 billion over ten years.

“Ironically, the United States may have as much influence over Iraq and Afghanistan once it withdraws from them as it did when occupying those countries.”

The other blade was forged in the area that Washington made the top priority for its strategic policy after 9/11, western Asia. In particular, the American position is slipping within the two Muslim countries where it has shed the most blood. The United States may not withdraw completely from Iraq; politics in Bagdad and Washington might buy room for a few thousand trainers to remain. It will maintain influence throughout Iraq, and no doubt provide a security umbrella, but American power there is declining. The same will soon happen in Afghanistan. Foreign governments committed to conflict in that country do not leave because their armies are beaten, but because it is worthless. Characteristically, they go when economic conditions at home lead the public and statesmen to question the point of any costs in Kabul – Britain in 1840, the USSR in 1986, and the United States in 2012. Meanwhile, across western Asia as a whole, every week’s headlines announce further problems for the United States: American intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan strengthened the position of Iran by destroying hostile regimes and opening fields for its influence; Iran threatens the United States and many of its neighbours, which strike back; Israel’s relations with Muslim countries are as problematical as ever, especially given the collapse of its alliance with Turkey; and instability is rife across the Middle East, driven by the Arab spring. Flashpoints are legion.

So far, this analysis fits a common Canadian view about the decline of the United States, but one caveat must be raised. In the middle term, the United States easily has the strength to solve these problems and enough will and wisdom to do so. Over the next decade, its defence budget will decline significantly, but probably less than it did after 1989 and from a position of unparalleled superiority, where its military expenditure matches virtually the rest of the world’s combined. Some of this reduction will be automatic – simply ending operations in Iraq and Afghanistan will meet much, or all, of the \$450 billion cut in defence spending over the next decade. Further reductions can be found by slimming the legendary waste in defence programmes, and the 500,000 contractors working for the Pentagon. Granted, some cuts will be

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substantial, especially for the Army and Marines. As a result, the United States will lose the ability to occupy any strong country in the third world, but it will remain able to punish any of them. Its air force and navy have an overwhelming lead over any rivals, which will not erode substantially within twenty years. Now that terrorist groups threatening the west have been hammered, perhaps withdrawing from operations will reduce the formation of new ones while Predators will kill real threats.

The most grandiose aims of American policy in western Asia since 9/11 have failed, at heavy cost to all, but its preeminence has not ended. That region is becoming a secondary concern for American strategy. The United States can easily sustain a less ambitious policy there by acting as off-shore balancer, combining the maintenance of air and sea power, and politics. American power will matter in Iraq, where local parties, Saudis, Iranians and Turks jostle for influence, and equally in Afghanistan, where Afghans, Russians, Chinese, Indians, Iranians and Pakistanis work against each other. Ironically, the United States may have as much influence over Iraq and Afghanistan once it withdraws from them as it did when occupying those countries. American power is declining, but it will remain number one for generations to come. As always, however, the trick is how to turn power into political gain.

¹ Scott Wilson and Karen deYoung, "All U.S. Troops Leave Iraq by the End of 2011", The Washington Post, 22 October 2011.

² Office of the Secretary for Defense (Comptroller/CFO), February 2011, "United States Department of Defense, Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Request", http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2012/fy2012_BudgetBriefing.pdf

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Libya: A Victory with Asterisks



Written by:
Roland Paris

The grotesque display of Muammar Qaddafi's bloodied corpse in Sirte, where he was captured and killed, and later in a Misrata meat locker, did little to build confidence in the commitment of Libya's rebels to due process and the rule of law. It did, however, represent a clear culmination of the Libyan revolution. In recent years, we have seen few civil wars end with such devastatingly definitive victories.

This outcome also provides some vindication to Western leaders who initially pressed for military action last March, when Qaddafi threatened to overrun the city of Benghazi and to send his forces door to door to hunt down regime opponents. French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron led the calls for action. US President Barack Obama eventually joined their cause and lent America's diplomatic weight to the task of achieving a UN Security Council resolution authorizing intervention; and NATO, in spite of serious intra-alliance differences, succeeded in managing an effective aerial campaign. Qaddafi's demise and the rebel victory belied the warnings of commentators who predicted that Sarkozy's and Cameron's enthusiasm for intervention would result in NATO troops sinking into another quagmire of endless, needless war.

This success, however, was a qualified one, both for the Libyan rebels and for the NATO allies. It was a victory with asterisks, and these asterisks may eventually turn out to be more important than they appear at present.

The first asterisk is that Libyan rebels would likely not have prevailed without support from the world's most powerful air forces. Given that many people in that part of the world are understandably sensitive to the intrusions of outsiders, especially former colonial powers, both the rebels and NATO shared an interest in playing down the determinative role of Western air power. Doing so allowed rebel leaders to sustain the narrative of Libyan resistance

and victory, which is, in effect, the 'founding story' of the post-Qaddafi Libyan state, or what Libyans themselves now call the 'new' Libya.

If events had unfolded differently – say, if the NATO air strike on the column of vehicles carrying Qaddafi out of Sirte had killed the Libyan leader, rather than forcing him into the hands of Libyan rebels who then killed him – the narrative of home-grown victory would have been put at risk. As it turned out, NATO was either very well-informed, or very lucky, or both, because its instrumental part in halting Qaddafi's escape has been overshadowed by images of Libyans doing the dirty work themselves.

However, the asterisk remains, and if Qaddafi's former loyalists were ever to organize into opposition, armed or otherwise, they might use the rebels' dependence on Western 'imperialist' powers against them. Right now, with Libyans celebrating their former leader's demise, that scenario is hard to imagine, but political conditions in Libya, as elsewhere, can change unpredictably and new information about the conduct of the war might emerge.

The second asterisk qualifies NATO's success. Yes, the alliance overcame internal divisions, but it did so in part because the conflict ended when it did. During the long summer months of stalemate in Libya, the resolve of some NATO members, including Italy, began to wobble. Some members, such as Germany, had never contributed to the intervention in the first place, but losing the support of those who had signed on would have been damaging to the alliance's campaign, and it is not clear how much longer the alliance could have kept its fighting coalition together if this stalemate had continued. At the very least, this raises questions about NATO's ability to sustain internal political support for such operations in the future.

The third asterisk relates to the United Nations and the apparent success of its effort to protect Libyan civilians from Qaddafi's forces. Security Council resolution 1973 represented the first major implementation of the decade-old Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine: it authorized armed force "to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack." Given the sustained

"Indeed, the Libya intervention may have been the first and last major R2P intervention authorized by the United Nations."

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resistance of many states to the idea of R2P in recent years, it was quite amazing that none of the 15 members of the Security Council – including permanent members Russia and China, and regional powers South Africa, Nigeria and Brazil – voted against resolution 1973.



Photo Source: dailynews24.com

Initially, NATO's UN-authorized air operation focused on protecting the civilians of Benghazi, who were at immediate risk from Qaddafi's forces. The initial wave of airstrikes also destroyed much of Libya's air defence system so that NATO planes would not be endangered. Later, however, when a stalemate developed on the ground between the rebels and regime loyalists, NATO found itself in an increasingly untenable situation. As noted above, political support for the mission was slipping in some NATO countries; yet, to stop the operation would almost certainly have meant the defeat of the rebels and renewed threats against the same civilians the UN and NATO had pledged to protect.



Photo Source: *Globe and Mail*

In the face of this conundrum, NATO expanded its interpretation of resolution 1973 and broadened the scope of its bombing to include virtually all Libyan military targets, from command and control facilities in Tripoli to armoured vehicles, wherever they might appear. In effect, the mission became one of regime change, even though NATO insisted that it bombed only to protect civilians. This fiction fooled few observers and it generated a sharp reproof from some of the countries, including Russia and South Africa, that had initially supported (or, at least, not opposed) the resolution's implementation of the R2P doctrine, but who now felt that they had been misled.

The implication of this asterisk is that securing passage of future R2P resolutions through the UN Security Council may be considerably more difficult. Indeed, the Libya intervention may have been the first *and* last major R2P intervention authorized by the United Nations.

Roland Paris is a Fellow of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute. He is also University Research Chair in International Security and Governance, and Director of the Centre for International Policy Studies, at the University of Ottawa.

“Crowdsourcing” Policy Development



Written by:
Gordon Smith

It is time for some new thinking. We all know that the world is changing. Power is being redistributed, although gaps in wealth and access continue to grow. Technological change in

many areas is rapid. It is easier than ever for people to connect and to have information without delay.

But everything isn't changing. The world is still made up of “sovereign” states. Despite the fact that we live in an increasingly interdependent world, our capacity for international governance lags behind, perhaps increasingly behind. There are not only almost 200 states, but there are important “non-state actors”, ranging from big multinational corporations to an exploding number of non-governmental organizations.

The problems the world is facing are complex. They cut across organizations such as government departments and they cut across intellectual disciplines. Breaking global deadlocks often requires the kind of “big picture” negotiations that only heads of government can undertake. There must be something in broad global agreements that provides for everyone to be able to say he or she “won.”

“Think tanks,” including the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, have never been needed more, but their work has never been more complicated.

The products of think tanks – papers, short briefing memos, meetings – have often been directed towards government departments and the public servants who work in them. I would argue that the targets of think tanks' products must change, particularly in Canada.

There is a major shift occurring in Ottawa in the way the system works. The Prime Minister and his colleagues are no longer looking to the public service for evidence-based policy advice. They are neither looking to the public service for new policy ideas, nor asking how to deal with longstanding problems. Instead, the Prime Minister and his colleagues want the public service focused on implementing their political decisions.¹

The effects of this change can already be seen in the appointments of people to the upper ranks of the public service. Administrative ability is valued substantially more than policy development capacity. While management capability has always been important, now execution of decisions is paramount to creativity in finding solutions to the country's, and indeed the world's, problems.

The likelihood is that the Conservative Government will be reelected. After ten years or so the changes in the public service and its relations to ministers will be almost impossible to reverse. That is the plan. What is at stake is an important change in the Canadian governmental culture, and indeed in Canadian society more generally.²

Think tanks, including CDFAI, need to recast their ways of operating. My suggestion is for what might be called an indirect strategy, focused on people who can have the most impact on the decisions to be taken at the political level. To repeat, these people are no longer executives or desk officers in the federal public service.

“We need to build and nurture effective networks not only to disseminate new ideas, but also to push for policy change built on them”

Think tanks need to be forward looking. Where think tanks differ from traditional university-based research is that they need to do more than rely on existing data. They have to be predictive and those predictions cannot just be based on extrapolations. Think tanks need to be able to make leaps in logic, to engage in truly innovative thinking and need to challenge old ideas and ways of looking at the world. Think tanks can also increase their effectiveness through networking with other think tanks.

Think tanks need to do their work in such a way that it influences public opinion. This can and should be through the traditional media. One can also exploit emerging social media to get to individuals directly, but the impact will be greater if there is amplification through key individuals in the traditional media. While government may not be interested in evidence-based policy advice from its officials, the government is certainly interested in listening to public opinion. The Canadian government, like any other, puts top priority on being reelected.

There is a demand in much of the world to open up policy processes and governance. It underlies the Arab

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Revolution, but can be seen in developed democracies as well. There is disenchantment about government and, more generally, with any authority figures.³ There is a demand that policy must be more citizen-driven. Of course, no one is sure how to do this, but it makes sense that think tanks focus more on citizenry and, in particular, those opinion leaders who can influence citizens. This is the key recommendation of this report.

Some people would argue government should see itself more as a convener than a decider. This goes a little far for my liking. Politicians in democracies will always want to be perceived as leaders. There certainly is little sign in Canada that government will be less controlling. Indeed the opposite is more likely.

New ideas on reaching the public, primarily through opinion formers, should include how best to use social media. For people of a certain age (I would include myself), it can often become a matter of coping with new technology, not living it. There is too much information, not too little.

It has been fascinating to see how the traditional media has evolved just in the past year. Journalists such as Nick Kristof of the New York Times and Anderson Cooper of CNN both use social media effectively to draw attention to what they have done, are doing and will do. But both do more. They invite a cooperative arrangement with their followers. They ask for assistance. They interact with their readers and viewers. If they can do it, think tanks should engage with them, but also with the interested broader public.

Social media is filled with rumours and unsourced assertions. There are now a few individuals, above all Andy Carvin of National Public Radio, who have taken on the role of "curators." Carvin looks for confirmation of reports. He attaches photos to Tweets and asks if someone can help him identify a certain weapon or location. If one reads with care, the *Twitterverse*, as it is called, becomes an interesting source of information for what is going on, and a way for think tanks to reach opinion formers.

It is, however, much like working with raw intelligence. You can't believe it all, but there are some gems from time to time that you don't want delayed or over-analyzed by inter-departmental committees. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of social media. Of course there were revolutions before *Facebook* and *Twitter* and people found their way to whatever the gathering place was, but it is also easy to downplay social media too strongly. If the reader would like an idea of the role Twitter played in

Egypt, read *Tweets from Tahrir*,⁴ a collection of messages from the critical period in the process that overthrew Mubarak (but not the Egyptian military, at least yet).

The explosion in numbers of smartphones is also of great importance. In particular, the video clips that we have seen coming from smartphones in the Middle East this

Think Tanks

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year have made a contribution to a feeling that one cannot refuse to respond to widespread calls for help. It was exactly this, information from smartphones, which led to the no-fly zone and eventual air action in Libya. It is now possible for smartphones to have their video or photos appear with an embedded date, time and location. They can upload their video very quickly and it is almost instantly available on YouTube or to be rebroadcast by traditional media.

What this means is that individuals become journalists. Nik Gowing of the BBC coined the phrase “robohack” journalists to describe the kind of citizen/high tech broadcasters that result.⁵

The use of social media already goes beyond that of journalist or analyst. Indeed, beyond what are now becoming conventional appeals to science-oriented crowdsourcing (as with NASA’s “clickworkers” or Zooniverse or the Citizen Science Alliance more generally), there are examples of application in policy formation and even legislation.⁶ Iceland has decided to crowdsource the rewriting of its constitution.⁷ There is another interesting project entitled “Cloud to Street.”⁸ It is an initiative to create a crowdsourcing platform for a discussion of fundamental human rights principles to be enshrined in the new Egyptian constitution. Who knows if these and other projects will work? These are very much experiments, but they will tell us something about the potential (or otherwise) of social media to promote democratic political development.

Thus we return to the role of think tanks. The good news is that we are needed more than ever. The “other” news (certainly not bad news) is that we have to operate in a different way. We need to build and nurture effective networks not only to disseminate new ideas, but also to push for policy change built on them.

Governments are still struggling with what to do with social media technology. The most obvious path for governments is that social media can be another way of getting out information. Think tanks can do the same, and more, if they engage, above all, with leaders in the traditional media who, in turn, can enlarge our audience for the ideas we put forward. Clearly this takes time, and time is money. But it may be the most effective way to have influence, the purpose of organizations such as CDFAI.

¹ I know this may sound extreme but a few days after drafting this paragraph I read Jeff Simpson revealing article <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/will-the-defence-department-circle-the-wagons/article21865456/>.

² The argument in the last three paragraphs is based on extensive discussions with people in and around Ottawa. I cannot cite quantitative evidence.

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/world/as-scorn-for-vote-grows-protests-surge-around-globe.html?_r=1&sp=2&sq=democracy%20malaise&st=cse.

⁴ <http://www.orbooks.com/our-books/tweets-from-tahrir/>.

⁵ Nik Gowing is credited with the phrase when he used it at a speech given at King’s College London, in the Liddell Heart Centre for Military Archives on 2 March 2000.

⁶ See <http://dawn/jpl.nasa.gov/clickworkers/>, www.zooniverse.org and www.citizensciencealliance.org.

⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/09/iceland-crowdsourcing-constitution-facebook>.

⁸ <http://www.cloudtostreet.org>.

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The Return of the Ottoman Empire à la Erdoğan?



Written by:
Cameron Ross

Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan is on a roll. Recent visits to Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya have caused many to hail Erdoğan as the "King of the Arab Street."¹ His ruling

Justice and Development Party (AKP) has found what appears to be a "neo-Ottomanism"² policy that nicely mollifies liberals and energizes Islamists. Or has it?

Recep Erdoğan is a charismatic leader whose oratory and economic skills have earned him voter support. His last election, won with 49% of the votes, heralded a new era in Turkey's relatively young democracy. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Atatürk forged the current state in 1923. Democracy really took hold on Atatürk's demise in 1938. Military coups in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 provided compass corrections for Atatürk's model of a secular state.

The military coups happened because the military had popular support; they no longer do. Erdoğan's AKP party does have that support and is pro-Islamist. He has neutralized the Generals, jailing many. "It raises the suspicion that the government is not interested in civilian control; it's interested in removing anyone who opposes it."³ Turkey's well-educated middle class urbanites are following the west's voter apathy. Voter turnout is high amongst the 30% of the population who are rural, less educated, devout Muslims who have higher birthrates.

Erdoğan was hugely successful in turning Turkey's 2001 desperately bleak economic picture completely around. An economist, he reversed the country's downward spiral in debt, foreign direct investment, corruption and high unemployment (12%). In 2010, Turkey enjoyed the fastest GDP growth in the G20 (8.2%).

With a strong foundation of domestic popular support and a strengthening economy, Erdoğan has focussed his energies on what some have termed as hyper-diplomacy. Since April 2011, he has had visits to the 'Arab spring' countries of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. While visiting the

latter, he insisted on visiting Gaza to show his solidarity with the Palestinians; the Egyptians denied the request. His recent trip to Mogadishu marked the first non-African leader to visit Somalia since 1991.



Photo Source: nytimes.com

His anti-Israeli support for the blockade-breaching Gaza flotilla has more recently been backed with the threat of assigning Turkish naval vessels to escort future expeditions. He has threatened to use warships to intercede in the offshore oil drillings around Cyprus. This gunboat diplomacy and splendid sabre-rattling rhetoric was topped by his threat to Syria to stop the domestic violence 'or else'; the 'else' has yet to materialize.

"I know of no European country that is acting as confidently and as unilaterally as Turkey."

What is certain is that Turkey is emerging as a regional influence. Some use the term 'power'; Stratfor's Freidman goes so far as to say "I know of no European country that is acting as confidently and as unilaterally as Turkey."⁴ This invokes visions of a new Caliphate stretching from Ankara through Gaza and along the north-African coast to Morocco.

A new Ottoman Empire à l' Erdoğan? Not likely.

Economically, Turkey is on the cusp of what could be a calamitous downfall. Erdem Basci, Turkey's central-bank governor acknowledges that, though "the (Turkish) ship is steady, the seas are choppy, a storm might erupt at any time."⁵ Its developing manufacturing base is dependent on exports to the EU which, with its own economic challenges, is less inclined to import foreign goods.

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Competition from China is threatening Turkey's market share. Almost 5% of the workforce is working overseas; their return resulting from global economic compression would add to the domestic stresses. Recent domestic buying sprees have been fuelled by free government loans that in turn are based on foreign debt. "(economic) growth remains grossly unbalanced, which raises questions about the sustainability of Turkey's recent stellar growth performance".⁶ Turkey's current account deficit of 10% is worse than Greece's and Italy's.

While the middle class have so far refrained from criticizing Erdoğan's move to de-secularize the state, their mood, as has happened in other countries, will quickly change if the economy turns sour. Additionally, the Kurds are growing in strength. The *Economist* recently wrote: "Turkey will be a better model for its region if it fixes its Kurdish problem."⁷

Erdoğan is clearly a force for the future. But 'the King of the Arab Street' would be wise to fix his own roof shingles before advocating a rebuilt neighbourhood.

¹ Foreign Affairs; 15 September 2011; Steven Cooke; *Erdogan's Middle Eastern Victory Lap*

² Time; 30 April 2011; Pelin Turgut; *How Syria and Libya Got to Be Turkey's Headaches*

³ Bloomberg; 30 July 2011; Steve Bryant, Ercan Ersoy; *Erdogan Closer to Civilian Control of Turkish Military After Generals Quit*

⁴ European Institute; March 2011; Bill Marmon's review of George Friedman's *"The Next 100 Years; A Forecast for the 21st Century"*

⁵ The Economist; 5 May 2011; *The Turkish economy: Overheating*

⁶ Wall Street Journal 12 September 2011; *Turkey's Economy Keeps Humming*

⁷ The Economist; 24 Sep 2011; *Turkey and the Arab spring; A flawed example*

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The Terrorist Threat Ten Years After 9/11



Written by:
Aurélie Campana

Much has been said and written about the terrorist organization al-Qaeda (AQ) on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and the United Airlines flight 93. Although AQ's operational capabilities have been severely diminished since 2001, they still represent, for many Western countries, the ultimate non-conventional threat. This widely shared perception results mainly from the huge psychological impact the deadly 9/11 attacks have had across the world, as well as from the fact that many Western governments have turned AQ into an obsession. However, the recent terrorist attacks in Norway remind us that terrorism has multiple faces.

Terrorism is continually changing and evolves according to many factors, including states' actions and responses to it and the local and global socio-political environments. Although Canada has been less affected by terrorism than other Western countries throughout history, it could not ignore some of the most salient evolutions. We will address three of them for they represent strong tendencies that illustrate some of the evolutions of terrorism. They are neither new, nor specific, to a certain type of terrorism. But globalization and today's means of communication certainly act as catalysts for rapid transformations.

The first trend relates to the diffusion of terrorist methods. Individuals, like Jihadi foreign fighters, have had an instrumental role in transmitting terrorist tactics; however, contacts between terrorist groups could also occur virtually and imitation is another facet to be considered. Indeed, we observe that some of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, India, North Caucasus, Somalia, etc. use quite similar methods, including suicide-attacks and large-scale coordinated raids. Some local insurgent Muslim groups tend to import tactics used in other contexts. Most of the time, this comes with an artificial shift in discourses, the integration of a Jihadi rhetoric and a global agenda with local grievances. The Sect *Boko*

Haram (Nigeria) is a case in point. While it has favoured for years "classical" terrorist methods and attacked only local targets, it recently resorted to suicide-bombings and in early September 2011 blew up the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja. Even though these actions are congruent with its anti-Western positions, it might also illustrate the connections this group has established with North African groups and especially with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

This brings us to the second trend: the linkages terrorist groups develop between themselves or with other violent groups. AQ has built up a franchising strategy that mainly consists of establishing relationships with local organizations that adopt the label "al-Qaeda" and wage attacks on global targets, while still keeping up their local agenda. The degree of these links and the nature of the relationships are still a matter of debate. However, in a context in which "al-Qaeda Central" has been extremely weakened by the death of its charismatic leader, Osama Ben Laden, and the "Arab Spring" that has shown its irrelevance, AQ affiliates, and more particularly al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Al-Shabaab, are now considered to be the most serious threats to the security of many Western countries. Such connections have, over time, been a major source of concern for states.

Spain has expressed concern for years over the links between the Basque organization ETA and the Colombian FARC. The putative linkages between South American criminal groups and terrorist groups, including Islamist ones, also show that connections may be formed with groups of different natures based on convergent interests and/or organizational, financial and operational needs.

The third trend refers to the constant diversification of terrorist threats. The degradation of the socio-economic contexts in Western European countries, as well as in the United States, make some experts fear an increase in terrorist attacks coming from left- and right-wing groups. At the same time, ecological terrorism and separatist terrorism could still have destabilising effects. The main sources of concern for the Western States, however, are said to be home-grown terrorism and, more particularly, "lone wolves" who could, like the presumed author of the terrorist attacks in Norway, or the alleged perpetrator of

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the failed terrorist attack on Times Square in May 2010, act alone, be they radicalized on the Internet, inside a structured group or in a training camp.

Ten years after September, 11 2001, we do observe a sort of trivialization of terrorism that has become a tool for many groups, irrespective of their objectives and their ideological affiliation. While the situation varies from one country to another, terrorism represents a changing threat whose transformations follow the evolutions of our societies.



Photo Source: topnews.in

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Photo Source: m24digital.com

Thinking Creatively about Taiwan



Written by:
David C. Wright

The Republic of China has turned 100 years old this month. On October 10, 1911, republican revolutionaries inspired by Sun Yat-sen started the uprising that ultimately culminated in the overthrow of the Manchu Qing dynasty, which had ruled China since 1644. The new Republic of China formally announced its founding on January 1, 1912. China has been a republic (and not a constitutional monarchy) ever since then, first under the Nationalists of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, and after 1949 as a communist dictatorship, the PRC (People's Republic of China).

On mainland China in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek lost a bitter civil war with the Chinese Communists under the leadership of Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung). That year his ragtag army and regime fled to Taiwan, an island that both he and Mao Zedong regarded as Chinese territory. From Taiwan, Chiang insisted solipsistically that his was the sole legitimate government of China and that he would one day reconquer the mainland and restore his Republic of China there. Incredibly, most major countries recognized Chiang's Quixotic claims for a very long time. In 1964 France was the first to wake up to reality, severing its diplomatic ties with Chiang and establishing them with the PRC on the mainland. Canada followed next in 1970, followed by Japan.

No democrat, Chiang ruled the island with an iron fist until his death in 1975. His government slaughtered around 20,000 Taiwanese in 1947 for not displaying complete fealty to his regime. For nearly four decades a state of martial law was in force on the island. His government ruthlessly cracked down on dissent and any hints or whiffs of advocating formal independence and statehood for Taiwan. His security forces randomly imprisoned several tens of thousands of people on the flimsiest of circumstantial suspicion, and it executed hundreds of innocent people it suspected of being "bandit agents," or spies for the PRC.

In the 1990s, things finally began changing for the better in Taiwan. In 1996 it held its first fully democratic presidential election, and by the late 1990s it was a fully free and democratic society. It remains so today, in spite of the

looming and glowering threat from the mainland and its cynical, nihilistic belittling of Taiwan's stupendous transformation from a military dictatorship into a democracy.

Today, public opinion polls have indicated that absent any threat or coercion from mainland China, a majority of Taiwan's electorate would opt for establishing formal independence for their island. This, however, will never happen, and all but the most stubborn and myopic of Taiwanese do know this. The wise majority of them prefer something of an ambiguous "not unified [with mainland China], not independent" status for their island.

Meanwhile, it is both a tragedy and a travesty that the existence and viability of the fully democratic island of Taiwan is not more widely known and esteemed in the international community. Diplomats of all countries are formally forbidden to utter the words "Republic of China" or to have it written on any official document. US travel visas for citizens of the Republic of China on Taiwan say that they are issued in mainland China, but in truth they are processed and issued right at the American Institute in Taiwan (the unofficial embassy of the US in Taiwan) right in Taipei, Taiwan. US diplomats who serve in Taiwan have to go through the game of "retiring" from the State Department and working as private citizens until their tenure on the island is up, after which they are "re-hired" by the State Department. The games Beijing plays.



Photo Source: beijingolympicsblog.wordpress.com

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The Republic of China on Taiwan today needs and richly deserves more international space. It continues to exist (and flourish) in international limbo, somewhere between recognized statehood and status as an island province of PRC. Taiwan does not want to be ruled by Beijing, at least right now, and its wishes should be taken seriously. Somewhere between being a country and being a province there should be some creative thinking for affirming Taiwan's democracy and recognizing its respect for human rights. The lead in this regard might well be taken by Canada, just as it was in 1970, when Canada and the PRC recognized each other diplomatically and agreed on the "takes note" formula, which had the PRC state its stance on the Taiwan issue and Canada state that it "takes note" of this stance, while neither affirming nor denying it. This creative approach was used by other countries in the 1970s as they broke with Taiwan and recognized Beijing. So think, DFAIT, think.

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Limited War in Support of Unlimited Aspirations: A New Variant of a Forgotten Controversy



Written by:
Denis Stairs

Some of the 'grey-hairs' among us may be able to recall from first-hand memory the "limited war" debates of North American armchair strategists more than half a century ago. The context then was very different, but the discussions of the day may still have relevance now, even if current circumstances require that the issue be differently framed to gain illumination from exploring it.

World Wars I and II were often described as "total" wars. The designation seemed appropriate on a number of grounds, even if the concept itself was rough at the edges. Both the "Great War" and World War II were conducted by countries scattered all over the world. Both entailed the mobilization of massive 'citizen armies,' usually marshalled with the help of conscription. Both forced the combating powers to re-direct the work of their economies on a vastly intrusive scale. Both paid little heed to such distinction as might be drawn between civilian and military targets. Both generated tens of millions of deaths – more than 15 million in the first, and from 56 to 78 million (estimates vary) in the second. The wounded and the maimed (some of whom must surely have envied the dead) amplified the toll. In both, the scale on which property was destroyed – much of it far removed from the 'front lines' – was unprecedented. And in both, the participating adversaries legitimized the undertaking within (and without) their respective national communities by making reference more to fundamental principles and moral 'causes' than to concrete interests of the more menial sort (economic ones, for example). Such arguments may have been more reasonably grounded in the context of World War II than they were in World War I, but nationalist cries of entitlement, in particular, seemed to buttress the conduct of both contests with comparable effect.

All this reflected the interaction of a number of diverse, but nonetheless mutually reinforcing developments. Included among them were the rise of the industrial state, the evolution of military technology, the growth of nationalism in its various manifestations, the spread of literacy and the concomitant spawning of mass communications (the jingoistic gutter press included), the process of

democratization (whether liberal, 'guided,' or deceptively 'constructed' and forcibly imposed by radical 'totalitarian' controls), the competition for glory, riches and strategic advantage through the acquisition of empires overseas, and all the rest.

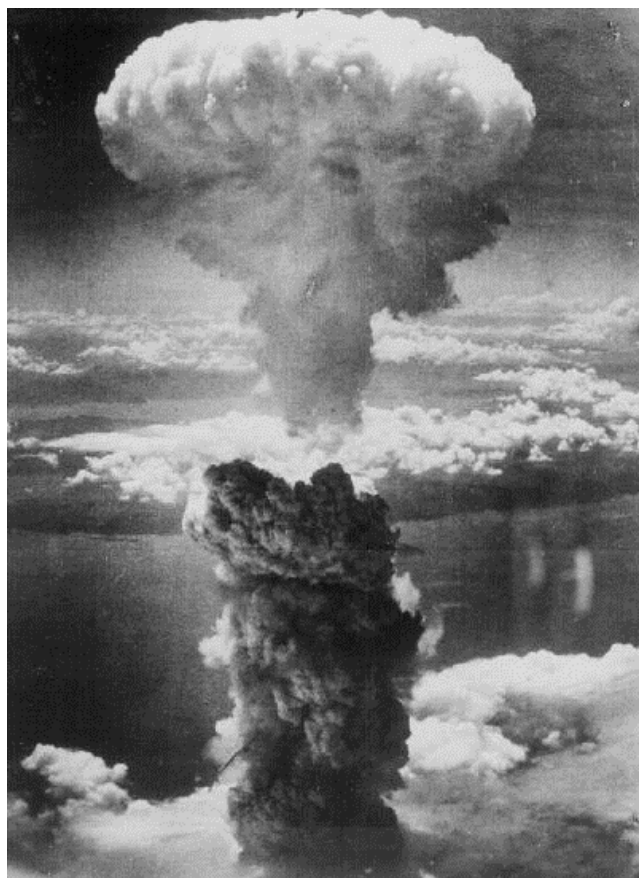


Photo Source: thehistoryplace.com

The upheavals of Antiquity aside, there had been massively destructive invasions often enough in earlier times – by Crusaders in the Middle East, for example, or Mongols in central Asia and much of Europe, or the armies of Islam in the Mediterranean surround. Later, in an age in which much of European statecraft could still be described as 'classical,' Napoleon's mobilization of his citizen armies of conquest under the cover of perverted interpretations of the fashionable verities of the 18th Century Enlightenment was a harbinger of what the 20th Century was to bring.

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But none of these precursors quite matched the scope of the horrors of the two 'world' wars, rationalized as they were by successful invocations of the 'good' and whatever could be advertised by political elites as fundamentally right, just and true.

In the liberal democratic world (and for that matter, in the communist world, too – albeit on the basis of a more radical strain of western political philosophy), this way of thinking about warfare and how it might be justified was at first carried over into the post-war period without too much difficulty. Reflecting the experience (and the public politics) of nearly a half-century of cataclysm culminating in two demonstrations in Japan of the explosive implications of atomic power, the prevailing view was that wars in the modern world were not at all as they had seemed to be in the classical age of the European state system – enterprises, that is, to be conducted by mercenaries, confined largely to battlefields (albeit on occasion with pillage and plundering in their wake), and prosecuted by tiny elites in pursuit of limited ends. They were fought, instead, in support of just

purposes – purposes that warranted going "all-out".

To the liberal democratic mind, the notion that a state governed by democratic precepts should fight a war, and hence do a lot of

killing, to accomplish aims that were neither ultimate (like self-defence) nor principled, but simply acquisitive, was offensive. Certainly it was difficult to accommodate. It was a bit like the idea of robbing a bank for the money to buy a car, and being willing to shoot someone if doing so was necessary to get the job done. This general conception had an obvious surface appeal for prosperous democratic populations that were drawn to the view that their governments' foreign policies should be grounded in unassailably virtuous intent, particularly in cases where the policies were likely to entail the death of some of one's own as well as some of the other. In a way, the conception spoke well of them.

But it was also an idea that had greatly troubled diplomats and other seasoned observers earlier in the century, when they had witnessed the destructive impact of such predilections on the bargaining at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, as well as on the radical politics of the inter-war period that flowed (in part, at least) from widespread disillusionment with both the negotiating process and the Treaty of Versailles that it produced. In the end, grounding foreign policy, including security policy, in first principles had made compromise much more

difficult, and it soon became clear that the outcomes were unsatisfactory. They made the case less for 'principle' than for prudence and pragmatism, and for the application of utilitarian tests in assessing the ethics of foreign policy behaviour.

In the years after 1945, among the first observers to detect a problem with what implicitly had become a modern variant of a 'just war' doctrine were planners in the Pentagon. But their concern had different roots. The U.S.S.R. was going to acquire nuclear weapons – and in fact did so a trifle earlier than expected. The Western powers, however, with the United States in the lead, had been relying on atomic weaponry to deter the Soviets from making unpleasant use of their massive Red Army, which was still at the ready. Indeed, the desire to bring the American atomic bomb to bear on the defence of a militarily incapacitated Western Europe was at the core of British initiatives in the forging of the North Atlantic Alliance. But once the Soviet Union had atomic weapons, too, along with the capacity to deliver them to targets far away, the technological advantage enjoyed by the West

would be gravely weakened. The Western nuclear arsenal might deter the

Soviets from actually *using* their new capability. But that would deter the West from using its capability, too. What, then, would

happen if the Soviet authorities went

in search of less-than-ultimate acquisitive opportunities at Western expense?

The conclusion was obvious: If the atomic weapons systems were stalemated on both sides, the West had to develop more conventional capabilities for dealing with 'limited' challenges at lower levels of priority and concern.

But there was a problem. This would be a very expensive undertaking. American politicians therefore resisted the idea (to the extent they knew of it), and even ignored the argument itself. Their resistance lasted until the outbreak of the war in Korea – the first 'limited war' of the Cold War era. The Korean conflict dramatized the problem, and made it real. Western decision-makers – and decision-makers in Washington above all – found themselves in need of conventional warfare capabilities to deal with a conventional war challenge. General MacArthur's personal preferences notwithstanding, he would not, and could not, be granted the authority to use nuclear weapons in or near the Korean theatre. Doing so would not be proportional, and it could not be defended. It would also have gravely de-stabilizing consequences for international

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"We have all become more accustomed and inured to the exercise of military power in limited ways."

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security over the longer term. The General had to fight his war with one arm tied behind his back (as he ostentatiously complained).

For Americans, in particular, this was an unsettling experience. The Korean conflict was said to be very important – sufficiently important to mobilize a major (and largely conscripted) military effort over three years. It generated a lot of dying. Civilian and military fatalities on all sides have been variously estimated from 2.5 to 3.5 million. But the enterprise did not, it seemed, warrant the use of all the arrows in the American quiver. Hence, it was far from an easy “sell,” and after General Eisenhower became President in 1953, the Republicans tried to paper over the underlying problem by articulating the “massive retaliation” doctrine of John Foster Dulles. In effect, the Soviets were warned that, if they so much as twitched, they would be hit by everything the Americans had.

In the meantime, strategists in think tanks began to consider options for what they sometimes called “limited strategic war.” Perhaps there could be strategic wars in which only miniaturized tactical nuclear weapons would be used. Perhaps there could be strategic wars that would be conducted as if they were like games of “chicken”. One side would take out a city. The other side would reply by taking out two of its adversary’s cities. The first side would retaliate by taking out three or four more of the cities of its opponent, and so on until one side or the other cried, “Uncle!” Herman Kahn wrote his lengthy *On Thermonuclear War*, in which he explored the practicability of the various hypothetical possibilities. Game theorists had a field day.

Eventually, however, such discussions largely died away. NATO toyed briefly with a “graduated deterrence” doctrine (envisaging the possibility of containing Soviet conventional forces by the deployment of nuclear weapons of different sizes so as to make possible retaliation at different levels of nuclear force). But it soon realized that the notion was fanciful, and in the early 1960s it was traded in for the concept of “flexible response” (which implied the need for a full range of both conventional and nuclear capabilities to accommodate any of a wide array of military challenges).¹

Later, when the Vietnam War got fully underway, there were adverse public reactions once again, but this time the critics were complaining not so much that the war was limited, but that it could not be defended at all. They thought it both morally wrong and functionally inept.

Since then, it seems, we have all become more accustomed and inured to the exercise of military power in limited ways. The use of military force “proportionally” seems to be widely accepted (implicitly, at least) as a sensible proposition. Perhaps this is partly because there is now a deeply ingrained and reasonably widespread understanding that the *unlimited* use of the force available would be intolerable. Perhaps, too, the familiarity that comes with repetition and longevity of effort results in a passive acceptance linked to boredom – a reaction more easily indulged when the combat forces involved are composed of professional volunteers rather than conscripts, and when the citizenry at large is being smothered by mass communications overload.

However that may be, we now appear to be facing a different challenge. It comes from our accepting on the one hand that the use of force ought to be limited, but on the other that our security objectives abroad should be so expansively defined as to embody virtues and values that we claim for ourselves and believe should be claimed by others, too. In effect, the objectives have become transformational.



Photo Source: metrolic.com

This is hardly a phenomenon new to the history of international politics, and it is always possible to argue in any case that the invocation of over-ambitious purposes is not causal in itself, but simply a mechanism for legitimizing and rationalizing policies that have really been made for other reasons. But these matters are almost always murkily inter-twined, and the combinations of considerations that are taken into account tend to vary from one kind of player in the political and policy-making process to another. In the end, our ideas, and the ways in which we interpret the world around us, do appear to count. How we think, that is, affects how we behave – even if some of the thoughts themselves are articulated

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partly in order to dissimulate (or at least to over-simplify), and hence to win support for what we do.

Such complicating subtleties aside, however, the imbalance that we now see before us results not from reliance on the application of unlimited force to the prosecution of limited ends, but from the application of limited force to the pursuit of unlimited (or at least very far-reaching) ends. One of the surprising consequences is that we are getting used to limited wars, even if their results are often ambiguous at best or counterproductive at worst. The problems involved in them, moreover, are amplified with the passage of time. And projects of this sort are nothing if not time-consuming. The military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have each lasted longer than the two total wars of the 20th Century combined, and few still have confidence that we will like the eventual result when we get it.

Even the case of Libya gives cause for concern. At first glance, the intervention there seems to be a clear example of limited force being used to pursue carefully defined ends. The intervening powers, after all, have avoided committing themselves to the achievement on the ground of larger purposes, even if they harbour high hopes. But their enterprise has given rise to a worrying new bit of jargon in the phrase “partial intervention.” The concept connotes approval of a model that entails limited military engagements unencumbered by commitments to supply any of the other putative components of social, political and cultural transformation. The model also offers the advantage of being deliverable at 30,000 feet. On the positive side, this has the merit of limiting the ends to match the easily available means, although as a practical matter it is not at all clear that there are many other environments in which the military effort could be so precisely and accurately applied. On the negative side, however, the best the partial intervention model can hope to accomplish in even the most favourable circumstances is to rule some eventualities out (in this case, the prevention of the vengeful slaughter of insurgents by a potentially victorious tyrant). It cannot otherwise determine what will happen next. Yet the ease with which the model can be applied risks encouraging us to indulge again in gratuitous wars or capricious ones.

Where does all this lead? Not far, perhaps. What does it imply? Not much, perhaps.

It does, however, remind us of Carl von Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is best understood as the continuation of politics with an admixture of other means. In traditional terms, it is an instrument of policy – one of

many. But it is the least pleasant of them, and in human terms the most expensive.

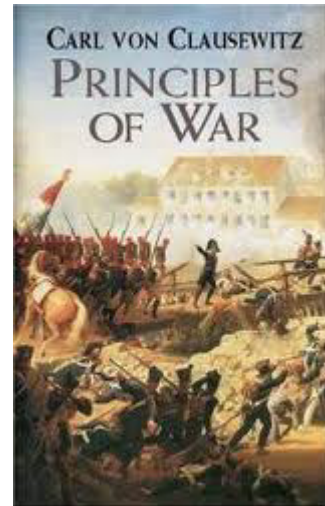


Photo Source: tower.com

It follows that actually using the instrument – or joining with others in its use – is an enterprise that needs to be undertaken only after a very careful assessment of what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what measure of control we will have over the results. If there is a clear and present danger of mission change or mission creep, if our motives are uncertain (or not our own) and our concrete objectives ill-defined, and if there is good reason to think we have no idea what the results should be (or are likely to be), we need to look with special care before we leap.

It is worth asking whether, in recent times, this standard has been adequately maintained in Ottawa, Washington, Brussels, New York, or elsewhere among the western capitals that figure most prominently in the course of international security affairs.

¹ Interestingly, this was the implicit premise of Soviet policy from the start, and Soviet strategists appear to have been mystified by the thinking of American and other western analysts who were preoccupied with the implications of nuclear weaponry in a bipolar world.

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Much Ado about Nothing? The 2011 Uprisings and Relations Between the West and the Arab World



Written by:
Marie-Joëlle Zahar

In the early months of 2011, Arab populations poured onto the streets from Tunisia through to Yemen. They demanded the resignation of leaders and the end of regimes perceived as unaccountable, unresponsive and corrupt. Faced with an unexpected groundswell of discontent that succeeded in its early days to depose two of the Arab world's longest-standing leaders, Zine al-Abidine ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Western leaders expressed concerns about the implications of these movements for the international relations of the Arab world. Two specific issues revolved around the security of the state of Israel (and the stability of peace agreements signed between Israel and its Arab neighbours) and the eventual rise of Islamist movements to power, something that many Western commentators foresaw as an omen of the radicalization of Arab politics.

While the uprisings are far from over and although it is particularly challenging to comment on events that are still unfolding, the past year has seen a number of developments that can provide the basis for a mid-course assessment. I will focus our attention on two questions: have the threats that were expressed come to fruition and what has been the impact of the uprisings on relations between the West and the Arab World? In answering the first question, I suggest that early fears were exaggerated. In answering the second, I argue that relatively little has changed. The article begins by providing a summary description of the contours of Western-Arab relations since the end of the Cold War. I then move on to an analysis of recent developments and to an assessment of the impact they may yet have on the nature and terms of the relationship.

Relations between the West and the Arab world rest on a single overarching premise: maintaining stability. This holds as true in the realm of economic relations (defined by the need to maintain the stability and predictability of oil flows and prices) as it does in the realm of security (where regimes perceived as bulwarks against revisionist states or groups were propped up both militarily and diplomatically – recall Western support to Iraq during the

Iraq-Iran war). The desire for stability has even helped maintain alliances in the face of severe strains. Thus, Saudi Arabia remained a close ally of the United States even as 11 of the 18 terrorists involved in the events of September 11, 2001, were identified as Saudi Citizens. Egypt continued to be the second largest recipient of aid from Washington, D.C, behind Israel, even as it failed to implement reforms in the economic and political realms and increasingly slipped into deepening corruption and authoritarianism. The unflinching commitment of the United States to assist Egypt was, of course, driven by the stability imperative. As the most important Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, Egypt was perceived as a cornerstone of the regional stability equation.

At the outset, the events of 2011 triggered fears among Western analysts and policy-makers that regional stability, understood as the stability of the pillars that underpin the protection of Western interests, might be at stake. Where do things stand one year on? In Egypt, the departure of Hosni Mubarak did not spell the end of the regime. The ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has steered the post-Mubarak era and sought to provide reassurances to Israel and the West. Following the August 2011 storming of the Israeli embassy in Cairo by angry mobs protesting the killing of five border guards by the Israel Defense Forces, SCAF did not only send the army out to fight protesters off, it also secured the release of an Israeli held in the country on spying charges. In Tunisia, the Islamist Ennahda Party won 47% of seats in the Tunisian parliamentary election of October 2011, rekindling fears about the role of Islam in the politics of Arab states. But Ennahda is no al-Qaeda and Party leader Rachid Ghannouchi has gone to great lengths to assure his countrymen, and the world at large, that his party intends to respect the rights of all, including women and non-believers, because in his own words: "Tunisia is for everyone." More tellingly however, the 2011 uprisings did not spell an increase in violence between Israel and the Palestinians. If anything, the two marking developments in this file, the swap of prisoners between Hamas and the Israeli government and the decision by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to seek recognition at the UN, indicate a move away from military engagements as the preferred instrument of struggle.

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"Relations between the West and the Arab world rest on a single overarching premise: maintaining stability."

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Little seems to have changed as well in the overall relation between the West and the Arab world. The importance of 'conservative' pro-status quo allies was recently underlined when the United States Defense Department described Bahrain, which brutally repressed dissent during the 'Arab Spring', as 'an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East,' announcing a \$53 million dollar sale of military equipment to the country hailed as a major non-NATO ally. Developments at the United Nations concerning the Palestinian request for membership similarly suggest that there has been no U-turn in Western stances, with the United States in particular, but many European countries as well reiterating that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not go through the UN.

There are, however, worrying signs that Western countries continue to engage with the region piecemeal, upholding values in one part of the Arab world even as they deny them in another corner of the region. And while this is not intended to suggest that the UN should have intervened equally in Libya, Syria or Bahrain, policy-makers and analysts should be concerned about the fact that many of the new governments in the region will have to be more responsive to their populations. Populations are where the disarray with Western policies is felt as the placards of Syrian protesters, who asked the world why it was turning a blind eye to their plight, so clearly showed. While nothing seems to have changed on the surface, there is a sea of change in Arab societies: millions of people are becoming effective and voters. This significant element needs to be factored in the manner in which Western governments reassess their relationship to states, people and issues in the Arab world.



Photo Source: newamericamedia.org

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These of course are short-term observations and one can rightfully ask whether things will not evolve in the long term and, if so, in which direction. Could it be that Islamists are playing their cards close to their chest and will reveal their 'true nature' once ensconced in power? Comparative historical experience suggests otherwise. Most Islamist parties that have been allowed to govern have had to deal pragmatically with two realities: their inability to address huge socioeconomic challenges better than their predecessors and the fact that others in society did not see things their way. Islamists might have been able to implement gradual changes (such as the reintroduction of the veil in Turkish universities), but they have not been able to overhaul society. From that perspective, the interesting and worrisome observation deriving from the Tunisian election is not the success of the Islamists, but the fragmentation and inability of their 'secular' opponents to close ranks.

Announcements

Speakers Series

In 2011, CDFAI launched a new Speakers Series based around Canada's relations with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), hosted by the Calgary Golf & Country Club and the Ranchmen's Club. The series began with Michael Bell on "The Arab Revolt: The Consequences for them. The Impact for Us.", followed by Paul Nelson on "Security Challenges of Doing Business in Yemen, A Canadian Oil and Gas Perspective". This highly successful series will continue into 2012 with Michael Novak, EVP of SNC-Lavalin, on a Non-Oil and Gas perspective on doing business in MENA on Feb 2 and conclude with David Silver, a Partner with Bennett Jones (Middle East) LLP who has been engaged in the practice of law in, or related to, the Middle East since 1982 and has been a resident in the region for over 25 years. These events have proven to be timely, informative and thought provoking regarding matters of increasing importance to world economic stability and Canadian foreign affairs and international trade. To attend and join in the discussion please contact Lynn Arsenault at 403-231-7605 or larsenault@cdfai.org.

Paper Releases

CDFAI has been extremely busy the past few months continuing to produce informative research to incite debate and offer essential perspectives on world affairs.

Our work has included a study on the importance of the Army Reserve titled "The Role of the Militia in Today's Canadian Forces" by Jack English; an assessment of the importance of the NORAD command to North American defence and security titled "Securing the Continent: Where is NORAD Today?" by Alan Stephenson; an analysis of Responsibility to Protect and whether it will survive titled "Can R2P Survive Libya and Syria?" by Martha Hall Findlay; and an extensive look at the lessons learned during the Afghanistan conflict titled "Lessons Learned? What Canada Should Learn from Afghanistan" by J.L. Granatstein and David Bercuson.

To access these papers, and many more, please visit www.cdfai.org.

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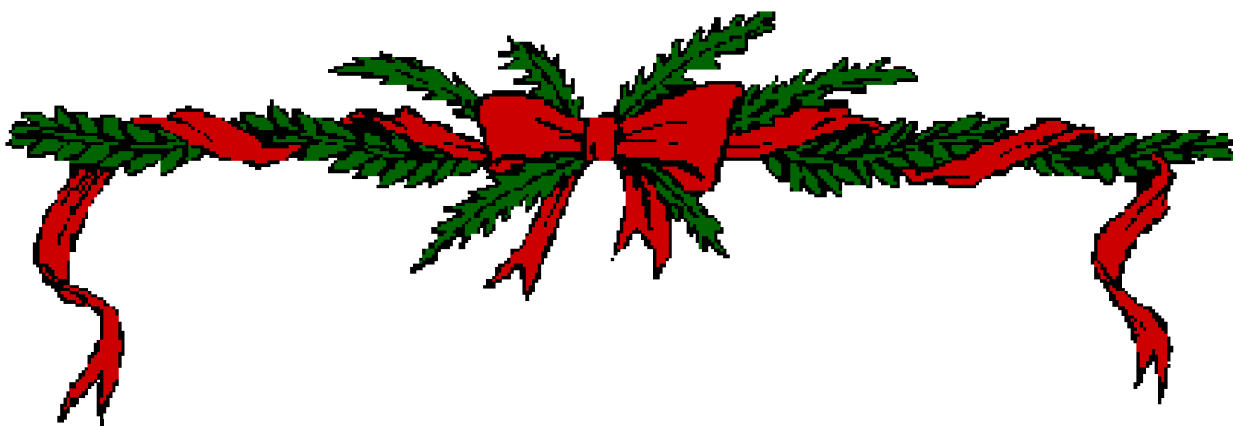
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Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute

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CDFAI was created to address the ongoing discrepancy between what Canadians need to know about Canadian international activities and what they do know. Historically, Canadians tend to think of foreign policy – if they think of it at all – as a matter of trade and markets. They are unaware of the importance of Canada engaging diplomatically, militarily, and with international aid in the ongoing struggle to maintain a world that is friendly to the free flow of goods, services, people and ideas across borders and the spread of human rights. They are largely unaware of the connection between a prosperous and free Canada and a world of globalization and liberal internationalism.

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