

Terrorism, Open Borders and Security

Robert J. Jackson
Visiting Fellow, National Europe Centre

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Email: Robert_Jackson@redlands.edu

Abstract: An assessment of the arguments about the rise of modern terrorist groups (al-Qaeda and WMD), the anti-terrorist strategies and most important, how the USA cannot be made absolutely invulnerable to attack.

Part 1.

The New Face of Conflict: Options and Challenges in the "War Against Terrorism"

After the horrific events in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, the question quickly became how the United States and its allies should react. Of course, the first instinct was to pulverize all enemies: to demolish the perpetrators of violence. This response clearly called for a military response. On reflection, however, many concluded that the response should be balanced and bear in mind the dilemmas and problems inherent in such an exercise. Clearly, the response had to increase peace and justice without creating unintended consequences or results. Since we didn't want to provide the conditions for future cycles of violence, how could we respond without escalating the situation? How could we respond realistically without provoking more revenge, retribution or fostering a new blood cycle?

Let us be clear about my position. The use of such terrorism is morally repugnant whoever carries it out, but the events of 9/11 were not unprecedented. There have been many other incidents of equal or worse horror. The Rwanda disaster resulted in as many deaths as took place in New York every day - for one hundred days. In that particular case, for example, the US took no action, and according to many experts actually prevented UN peacekeepers from doing anything significant to stop the bloodshed.

What was unprecedented on September 11th was that the most powerful state in the world proved vulnerable to attack from outside its borders. If the United States could not protect itself what country could? It was also clear that the attack's success could provide inspiration to dissent groups around the world.

The events of September 11, 2001 were the worst form of modern terrorists activities initiated from outside the United States, but there have been others.¹ The year before this attack there were an estimated 423 terrorist attacks around the world and almost half involved United States' interests.

The heinous events of September 11, 2001 led the United States administration and its

¹ The second worst terrorist attack on the United States was the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building by an American, Timothy McVeigh, which killed 168 people.

friends in other countries to launch a global war on terrorism. It is time to assess the results.

In theory, there was an entire spectrum of possible responses to 9/11 ranging from the military annihilation of targeted enemies of the United States to overt or covert special operations, to doing nothing. In considering all the possible options in the range of policy choices, there were four principles or criteria that we believe should have been borne in mind. The primary consideration of course was whether the policy would work, and it could work only if it pragmatically met the following four issues or criteria.

Policy Principles or Criteria

1. It eliminates terrorist organizations.
2. It does not do significant harm to our citizens.
3. It does not do significant harm to our allies
4. It is cost effective and does not reduce our ability to perform other more important functions.

New and Old Terrorism

If one is going to have a war on terrorism, it is fairly basic that terrorism must be carefully defined. The standard definition of terrorism –one author has found 109 of them in the discipline –is “the systematic use of violence or threat of violence against individuals and/or states to obtain political concessions.” In all of the standard government definitions, however, blame is put on groups or individuals promoting terrorism. States or governments are not considered to be the instigators. This is inadequate in many cases as terrorism is often state sponsored. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that when the term *La Terreur* was first coined for Robespierre’s Committee of Safety during the French Revolution it meant the systematic murder of civilians and bystanders by the government of the day. In this case a form of “state” violence was used against the public. And there are many more examples of state inspired terrorism.

Over the years, the term evolved to imply that terrorists were simply looking for publicity or bargaining for political purposes. They were not simply murdering or maiming people without a purpose. The terrorists became known as non-state actors and the word was/is used to castigate all such acts as heinous however noble the purposes might be. The word came to be used to defend the status quo or established order. The terrorist is always wrong.

The word terrorism became part of the ideology of government. Terrorists are enemies of the state. But, of course, the perpetrators never see it that way. For them, as the cliché goes, 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. But this is not merely the view of terrorists. Revising the definition of terrorism to recognize that terrorists can be fighting against tyrannical injustices helps us to understand the nature of terrorism. To accept only the status quo definition prevents us from understanding that terrorism is often an attractive strategy for the desperate, weak and persecuted. Terrorism may be the only technique that the powerless have.

Over time terrorism has also come to mean the 'threat' of the use of violence. "Kill one, frighten 10,000" as a Chinese philosopher described it. terrorists use fear as a weapon. Fear of terrorism has been so great since 9/11 that there is no need for terrorists to actually do anything. The mere suspicion that they might act closes down the stock market, stops flights of aircraft, disturbs traffic patterns, causes hospitals and schools to close. State and Police actions follow, sometimes legally, sometimes illegally, but always with the motivation of preventing terrorism. Clearly, terrorism needs to be understood both in terms of the actual violence used and the violence implied or feared.

We may never solve these and other definitional muddles, but realizing the other possible uses of the term certainly helps understand terrorists and their behaviour better. We will return to the issue of definition when we examine the various anti-terrorist strategies.

Group Behaviour

To understand terrorism we should put it in the framework or terms of the psychology of political group behavior. Several points need to be made. Cycles of violence in the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere do not come from nowhere. They are not isolated incidents provoked by madmen and fanatics. Cycles of violence cannot be explained by newspaper headlines about individuals and their fanaticisms. Such high levels of violence are the result of anger, hatred and frustrations. These deep emotions are constructed over time through a combination of historical events and experiences of extreme deprivation.

In this regard we need to understand that "realities are always constructed". The distinction between myths and realities is not a simple one – except perhaps to simpletons. Violence-prone individuals have unique understandings of reality. They have built up unique perceptions and interpretations of what is to be valued. In their "rational" understanding all things come together in a worldview of heroism versus evil. Their mind-set provides them with an elaborate explanation of why they hate some one or some thing. In this particular case, it explains why they hate America. Why, in their eyes, a jihad is reasonable, even necessary.

Born of insecurity, terrorist organizations attempt above all to "persist". In their search for survival they are organized (if that is the correct word) with a decentralized power structure, uphold extreme secrecy, and allow their sub-units considerable autonomy of action. Their members receive the benefits of group membership. The organization provides a cloak of anonymity, support and justifications for their actions and perhaps salvation in a glorious afterlife.

Terrorist organizations imbue their followers with ideology and identification. The "ideology" provides a relatively organized set of ideas and values that purport to explain and evaluate political conditions and propose guidelines for action. "Identification" concerns how individuals empathize with the political conditions affecting others, and is vital in such organizations. Bin Laden's message is clear ""Hostility towards America is a religious duty, and we hope to be rewarded by God". This is precisely the type of maxim that builds on ideology and identification.

It is not selfish, rational, calculations that make a terrorist. Fanaticism is made up out of loyalty and devotion to a cause greater than oneself. It is the excess of loyalty to a cause that provides the glue to terrorist organizations. Because of their experiences of direct violence, terrorist organizations are always preparing for the worst, preparing to regenerate in another place and form. Perhaps it is for that reason that terrorists do not pursue targets that are strong, but pick on the weakest links. Terrorism is a proof of weakness, not strength.

Anti-Terrorists Strategies

How well have the United States and the West in general responded to the terrorist threat? In evaluating the responses one must look beyond simply how well they have prevented terrorist acts and managed their consequences. We also need to bear in mind how the strategies have affected our own public; how our allies have responded; and whether we have created a new crop of dedicated terrorists by our actions. We need a clear vision of what we were, and are, trying to achieve and how well we have done in the primary task of reducing terrorism.

1. Scope: Who is the enemy?

The US administration has taken an extremely expansive approach to terrorism; one that is much too broad and comprehensive to be fully successful. In fact, the approach strikes one as similar in nature to the Red or communist purges of the 1950s in the United States in which civil liberties were set aside, leading to various violent interventions abroad, and

culminating in the Vietnam War. Lumping all foreign threats together makes it difficult to draw up an appropriate strategy.

As well as the official statements of the President defining the enemy, the US government has published three documents that structure the response.

They are

- 1) The National Security Strategy of the United States of America
- 2) The U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism
- 3) National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Combating Terrorism document defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents" (p.1) Immediately we are struck by the fact that the definition leaves states out of the equation. But elsewhere President Bush has taken the widest possible use of his conception of terrorism. As he put it on September 14, 2001 "our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil" (National Security Strategy, p. 5). This very broad goal and the use made of it in the declared 'war' to "rid the world of evil" has created an overly wide net in the search to prevent terrorism.

Included as evil enemies of the civilized world are the al-Qaeda network (said to have terrorist cells in 60 countries), other terrorist organizations of a global, regional or local scope, rogue states – including Iraq, Iran and North Korea and other unnamed countries, as well as, in a general way, terrorism as a phenomena, and Weapons of Mass Destruction

All of these individual topics have been subsumed and spoken about at one time or another as an undifferentiated threat to the United States – an evil, like communism, which must be totally eliminated. This approach could be excused as merely rhetoric and political propaganda, but unfortunately it has had a direct effect on foreign policy and, in particular, on putting the Iraq issue onto the anti-terrorist agenda. The most obvious connection between these two types of terrorism was made by President Bush when he declared "You can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terrorism. They're both equally bad, and equally as evil, and equally as destructive." (Washington Post, September 26, 2002)

Moreover, this comprehensive approach to terrorism was accompanied in the National Security Strategy by a switch to a pre-emptive strike strategy rather than the older strategy of containment and deterrence. The new policy found its first expression in the

attack on Iraq. The anti-terrorism policy and the belief that Iraq possessed WMD were both used to justify the pre-emptive war.

As no WMD have been found in Iraq, and are now not expected to be, it is not surprising that the administration now says the reason for the attack on Iraq was the terrible regime of Saddam Hussein and the nexus with terrorism. The claim that Iraq posed a direct or imminent threat to the United States has been quietly dropped whenever possible. Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill's recent revelation that he saw no evidence of WMD in Iraq during his time in the administration and that the government had been looking for a way to justify an attack would seem to provide enough evidence that this was a war-of-choice, not a war-of-necessity. Partisans can argue whether the policy of pre-emption should be based on whether a country has acquired or used WMD, but in either case this time there were no WMD.

The work inside Iraq has been a mixed bag of successes and failures. Without attempting to predict whether or not a durable and democratic regime will develop in Iraq, there is some evidence that the Iraq war has helped to recruit more terrorists to the anti-american cause. Whether there has been an absolute growth in their numbers we really don't know. But Iraq certainly has acted as a trap for Americans—with over 500 US personnel now killed since the declared end of the war. And if we reasonably assume a wounded ratio of 10 to one dead, there may have been up to 5,000 wounded. Moreover there has been an increase in the damage done with the growth rate of terrorist attacks much higher this Fall than in earlier periods. The impact of the capture of Saddam on this situation is still unclear.

Some of the various targets on the American list are more susceptible than others to a military "war" on terrorism. The defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan clearly destroyed much of the ability of al-Qaeda to operate openly and without interference. It was the type of action that the American military performs very capably. But, since that significant success, the military has been less effective, and good intelligence and police work have done more to damage the al Qaeda network.

President Bush has declared that the successes include - the seizure of \$200 million of terrorists' funds, the incapacitation of 3,000 al Qaeda operatives, and in the US, the conviction of more than 140 terrorists. (Speech to FBI Academy, September 2003). Such counter terrorism is fostered by good intelligence and overt and covert police action, with the military in a supporting role. Even in Iraq now, nation-building is not fundamentally being considered as a military role, and law enforcement must eventually move well beyond the military.

Has the USA crushed the idea of using terrorism as a weapon. On first glance This may appear to be a silly question but destroying terrorism in such a broad term never should have been part of US policy. In fact, many terrorist groups do not threaten the United States and their members are clearly not anti-American—examples include the Basque separatist party (E.T.A), the Provisional Wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. In fact, the European Union, which has agreed to freezing the assets of a list of terrorist groups, has so far resisted efforts to add Hamas and Hizbollah to its list despite American entreaties to do so.

As for WMD, the United States chose to attack the weakest of the three members of the 'evil-empire' because she could do so with little fear of reprisal. North Korea and Iran can only be contained or deterred, not pre-emptively attacked, because of their potential to do great harm to US interests if they are confronted. However, both states have nuclear weapons programmes that are more advanced than Iraq's.

2. Who is harmed by the war on terrorism?

As we seek appropriate responses to terrorism we need to recognize that there is a very important relationship between security and freedom. As we pursue more and more security for our citizens, civil liberties will, to an ever larger degree, be reduced. What balance should we aim for?

The intellectual problem here is that terrorists use the existence of a free and open society against itself. They use unconventional methods to attack vulnerable targets. As we try to respond to their approach, we risk losing the very values of freedom and civil liberties that we stand for. To an extent, terrorists make Americans understand that despite oceans on two sides and friendly countries to the north and south, Americans are as vulnerable as people in the rest of the world – people who have already had these experiences and have had to respond in various ways – good and bad – to terrorists.

In this regard citizens clearly are confused by governments telling them to get back to normal –to spend money and get on airplanes- while at the same time being told that there needs to be more security at airports and in the sky and at least in the United States, that fighter aircraft may be ordered to shoot down civilian aircraft under certain circumstances. I will return to this topic later.

3. Who else is affected by this policy?

How the American government treats foreigners is also crucial factor in judging the effectiveness on its 'war' on terrorism. The wider ones circle of alliances and friends, the

narrower the terrorist target will have to be. The more states and peoples can be brought on side the fewer the number of people that will need to be targeted for reprisals. The more a coalition hangs together, and the more a multi-faceted response can be used, the less one creates myths that will generate new terrorist groups.

The Security Council fiasco and the division of NATO members into two camps – one for attacking Iraq and the other opposed—harmed the cause of providing a common shield against terrorism. Despite considerable rhetoric, the division was caused not by French and German anti-Americanism but by the expansion of the war on terrorism to a war on Iraq.

It is quite possible that the war on Iraq and the consequent division that it created will sustain the very myths the terrorists wish to convey – namely , that the United States alone is self-centred and evil. By attacking Iraq the US has helped to perpetuate the very myths that terrorist leaders like, helping them to regenerate the arguments that perpetuate the use of violence for political ends.

The world needs policies that make terrorism irrelevant or inconsequential and do not unintentionally make it worse. Otherwise, we fulfill their prophecies and provide them with leaders, martyrs and justifications for violence into the future. We need to destroy the myths that perpetuate violence, not their people. We need to set our policies in the context of how historical grievances impact on terrorism. To do this the west and NATO in particular must be aligned in the strategy.

4. Financial Costs

The costs of making war in Iraq have already deflected the US from its primary anti-terrorist goal of eradicating the al-Qaeda network. Most of the financial burden is falling on the US alone. As of this October/November 2003 the US had 185,000 troops in and around Iraq. The so-called coalition of 29 countries had only 12,000. According to some calculations the costs of maintaining the US forces in Iraq is about \$4 billion a month. The budget request of President Bush this year was for \$87 billion to cover the military and reconstruction costs in Afghanistan and Iraq. But, unless Iraq stabilizes, this will need to be repeated in the years to come and there is little sign of that yet. This large financial figure needs to be put along side the dramatic figure that the US spends to fund the costs of maintaining about 370,000 active and reserve troops overseas from South Korea to the Balkans.

When these figures are placed in the context of economists' forecasts of a US deficit of \$480 billion for fiscal 2004, and a predicted total cumulative deficit of \$1.4 trillion for

the decade 2003-13 one can predict that something may have to give. Increases in government spending on education and transportation have increased dramatically since 2000. Recent legislation in the US including passage of massive taxes cuts, other tax revisions and the Medicare prescription drug benefits will also impact on the budgetary deficit and may make tradeoffs necessary. The administration may be forced to change its tax proposals or to cut overseas military expenditures.

5. Public Opinion and Politics

Public opinion continues to be divided over the war on terrorism and particularly the war in Iraq. It is not clear where this will end. Signs of public dissatisfaction over the war in Iraq have crept into the polls, with some showing a recent majority against the administration's handling of the war, but alas, the President has retained considerable popularity for his war on terrorism. We shall have to await the arrival of only one Democrat opponent to see how this will work out. Substantial changes are likely if a Democrat wins and even President Bush may shift his position after winning a second term.

Conclusion.

The overall war on terrorism has not and cannot work. It has not been successful in meeting the four criteria we formulated at the beginning of the paper. Perhaps the language of 'micro-surgery' would have been better than that of 'war' in the contest with terrorism. Rather than a 'war' we needed a measured and calibrated approach, one that would have dealt with the problem but not backfire or invoke more revenge. We did not get it.

The second major issue about terrorism is how to protect the Homeland. Here too the United States has generated many policies but they, too, are based on a false hope—that of securing absolute invulnerability to attack.

Part 2

The Utopian Belief in Invulnerability: Open Borders and Security

There are many reasons for the intellectual community to confront the current dilemmas about open borders and security. The efficient flow of people, goods, capital and ideas across borders is crucial to the health of the world economies. But borders can also be channels for the flow of illegal immigrants, drugs, terrorists and weapons of mass destruction.

The desire to have both prosperity and security is as long as history. Recently I have been reading Peter Ackroyd's new book on London as a biography, and the entire history is about the ebb and flow of prosperity with security. As it turns out there was never perfect security in London, it had to be invented over and over again for over 2,000 years. The combination of security with prosperity is vital but elusive.

It is difficult for academics to think about oxymorons like security and open borders because traditionally, academics have been either students of conflict and security and have hung their assumptions on notions of sovereignty and military force, or students of humanitarian causes such as economic development and aid, and based their premises on human rights and human dignity. There has been almost an ideological divide, with the much of the "left" studying development and poverty, and much of the "right" examining security and the military. They even differ in their conceptions of terms such as terrorism.

It is also difficult for public servants and politicians to think about open borders and security because they are a product of the administrative roles they play. Military officers provide military solutions. Police have their own ideas of what needs to be done. I am reminded of George Bernard Shaw's play – The Doctors dilemma- in which each physician has his favorite remedy which he then employs in every case, regardless of the illness.

Much has been done about homeland security around the world and particularly in the United States since September 11th. Most countries have adopted new anti-terrorist laws; set up new military command structures; created new transportation security administrations; adopted emergency preparedness measures; developed co-coordinating institutions and budgets such as the \$38 billion Office of Homeland security in the USA; and signed border security and anti-terrorist agreements with other countries. In the United States a colour-coded warning system tells us that we are at the yellow stage of heightened alert because one of Bin Laden's jailed officials says that maybe there will be an attack on American financial interests. Then again, maybe there won't be. Perhaps

most importantly, the intelligence agencies now have established a 'Terrorism Threat Integration Centre' to co-ordinate the information from their various agencies.

The Homeland Security issue is vital, yet almost all studies of the various agencies in the US have concluded that they are being starved of funds. This is especially true of the institutions whose duty is to respond if a terrorist attack were to take place. Emergency first responders such as firefighters, police and hospitals lack adequate financing and are unprepared to handle most possible terrorist- caused emergencies.

The USA has new co-ordination policies with most countries around the world including the European Union, Canada, Mexico and of course Australia. Within North America new structures and procedures sprout almost daily.

A 30 point plan between Canada and the United States calls for Canadians to be integrated into the US foreign terrorist tracking task force; new visitor visa policies; joint units to assess information on travelers; increasing the number of immigration control officers overseas; developing new biometric identifiers for documents; developing safe third country agreement; expanding the border enforcement teams; and enhancing project north star – ie. improving communication and co-operation between Canadian and US law enforcement personnel. The new 22 point US-Mexican agreement is similar, although Mexico is more integrated into customs and immigration type structures than into American anti-terrorist regimes.

The protocol with the European Union is less exhaustive but covers such topics as asset freezing, designating terrorist groups, extradition agreements, and the implementation of US-EUROPOL agreements on the exchange of personal data on terrorists. Bilateral agreements have been made with individual states about shipping and trade. There continues to be some disputes when EU data privacy laws conflict with what the US sees as its security needs.

Problems:

If such practical organizational, technical and personnel changes are needed to deter al Qaeda from new attacks then what is wrong with the overall policy thrust behind the homeland security changes? The answer is that the overall thrust of the programmes is based on an odious philosophy.

1. To provide perfect security against the outside world is an illusory, unattainable and dangerous goal. It will result in an endless and hopeless search for absolute security that can never be obtained.

At the theoretical level, to provide absolute security would require mapping the location of people and goods at all times. Travelers coming through airports and crossing borders would have to be screened and sorted. As one critic put it: They would have to be shepherded through "large filtration plants" to ensure only clean people and sanitized luggage and goods get through. Containers and even mail which moves on planes, ships, trucks and trains would have to be checked before they moved, and then be equipped with locks or seals. Electronic tags and GSP transponders would need to be affixed inside the boxes so that we would have computerized real time knowledge of where they are at all times. As futuristic as these ideas may be, the search for Such absolute security is exactly what the US is trying to achieve and demand of others. The American Container Security Initiative that was designed to prevent terrorism on containerized cargo is now enforced on every country that wishes to trade with the US.

The massive problems to be surmounted in order to achieve absolute security can be indicated with just a few examples. In 2000, 489 million people came to the United States and 127 million passenger cars entered. They were joined by 11.6 million maritime containers, 11.5 million trucks, 2.2 million railroad cars, 829,000 aircraft, and 211,000 vessels that passed routine U.S. inspections points. In the case of the containers alone it takes about three hours to adequately search just one 40 ft shipping container. In other words, if one counts the number of containers and so on that cross the borders and then measures the amount of work required to perfectly screen them, the number of new inspectors that would need to be hired to properly survey all the containers would be in the realm of 50 thousand new inspectors. In short, without massive public expenditure the United States would not have enough inspectors with the time required to provide invulnerability. Moreover, most containers are not even searched at their point of arrival in the United States, as this location is not their legal point of entry. Shippers have 30 days to get their cargo to a legal point of entry for formal inspection. In other words, the containers are on US soil before inspection, and any amount of dangerous cargo could be in or put in them during their voyage.

As difficult as screening containers may be, the screening of people is even more problematic. The many issues concerning immigration and airport and aircraft security are quite familiar. However it is worth noting that even with refined techniques and intensive surveillance in place, thousands of illegal Mexicans stream into the southern USA every year. In fact, the number is so great that governments are obliged to find ways to supply the illegal immigrants with social policies, education and health care, despite their illegality. It is clear that Desperate people will go to great lengths to devise ingenious ways to cross borders; long coastlines and land borders are always vulnerable.

In short, North America cannot become completely invulnerable to attack without adopting extreme, draconian devices such as requiring that US -approved inspections of all goods or people take place on foreign territories before entering the United States. The American policy to force other countries to adhere to strict standards of enforcement is already in place and well intentioned. But one doubts the ability of all countries to comply. The recent UN announcement (January 2004) that fewer than half (93) of the members of the United Nations submitted reports on their measures to implement UN guidelines on freezing assets, banning travel and embargoing arms of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban may be somewhat indicative of world inability to conform to the regulations or a rejection of the "war on terrorism".

Would these inspection points be like US fortresses on other people's territory as in the days of colonial empires of the past?

2. The attack on the world trade center and the Pentagon has encouraged governments in North America to rely more than usual on their immigration, customs and security services. As far as the American Intelligence agencies were concerned they needed reform anyway. September 11 merely showed how powerful this need was. During the Cold War, intelligence agencies had one principal target – the Soviet Union and its allies – and a finite amount of information. Today, they have many targets and many missions and an overwhelming amount of information. Their ability to cope effectively with the new tasks and required methods is questionable.

Analysis of soft public information is always subject to doubt, and our inability to penetrate terrorist cells, at least in the short run is unlikely because of the lack of trained, specialized Americans to carry out the tasks in foreign, poorer, countries. Until this problem is overcome there are limitations on what the reform of intelligence agencies can accomplish in regard to combating the secrecy and regenerative nature of terrorist groups.

More generally, American intelligence agencies and security forces lack accountability and transparency. The extensive use of such organizations therefore always raises the classic political philosophy question of who will guard the guardians. This problem is compounded by the fact that those politicians who have been defending freedom around the world have often become the strongest supporters of ideas, measures or organizations that reduce liberty. We see this for example in the structure of the various military tribunals that are being set up.

Perhaps the critical issue about homeland security will come down to how much Americans, Canadians, Europeans and others need to, and want to, change their daily lives

– how they travel; how they ship goods; how much they want to report to the local police when they move from one location to the next; whether they will be willing to submit to electronic surveillance; and whether they will be ready to finance the new policies. Will they be able to withstand the inconveniences, loss of privacy and expenses required to pragmatically reduce their states vulnerability to future attacks – especially when there is no end in sight, to either the restrictions or the terrorism.

Conclusion

The American government's response to the terrorist events in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 was inadequate. The symbol of US suffering, the destruction of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, was soon overlaid by images of raw US power, bombs and missiles raining down on Afghanistan and Iraq. In its haste to lash back at the perpetrators of 9/11 the US government chose too broad of an interpretation of terrorism and consequently is making serious mistakes in its foreign policies. Its contention that terrorism can be stopped by a military response – attacking and taking over the lands of other people – is wrong and burdens itself and the world with harmful consequences. The Bush doctrine cannot be successful, and the strategy will have to be changed radically or "the war on terrorism" will be lost. Have we created a quagmire: winning the war, losing the peace?

There are serious consequences in adopting mistaken views of international relations. Military attacks on terrorists will not resolve the basic social, economic, political and religious issues behind the 9/11 attacks or the causes that give rise to terrorism in general. Nor can absolute security be obtained. the search for invulnerability is naïve. The wars on poverty, drugs, crime and illiteracy have not worked. Neither will a war on terrorism. Perhaps what we needed was a "war of ideas".

In attacking Iraq without first acquiring overwhelming NATO and European Union support, the American response broke the trans-atlantic consensus. Their announcement of lofty ideals and raw power was the height of hubris. They were able to destroy the al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan, but their coercive actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hostile rhetoric towards the other "axis of evil" countries, are doing more harm than good. The consequences to date in terms of lives lost, financial costs and restricted liberties have been staggering. US armies are over-stretched in the quagmires of the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. They are not trained for peacekeeping, and the massive expenditures are exacerbating US budget and balance of payments deficits. The United States and Britain both desperately need their allies and friends to come back on side with contributions of money and troops to help resuscitate these failed states that

have been laid waste by foreign intervention.

Supporters of the Anglo-American case in Iraq have attacked the Europeans and other dissenters as wimps and appeasers. But the former European colonialists in particular have more experience of many parts of the world than the United States. Their forces are trained for peacekeeping. They have lived with terrorism for decades. They know that terrorists have to be countered by good intelligence and policing, and undermined by conciliating their supporters; democracies cannot destroy terrorism by raw power alone.

It is not sufficient to live in Fortress – keeping out the underprivileged and their goods. In this age of globalization, countries must engage with the world – preferably multilaterally. Walls never keep out enemies for long. The history of the British Hadrian Wall, the Chinese Great Wall and the Berlin wall are all evidence of that. It is only a matter of time before they come down.

Rather than building walls, America and her allies would be better off spending their funds, energy and diplomacy to improve the lot of other peoples' lives and futures. Security is vital but not at the cost of isolation, xenophobia, and the loss of values characterized by an open and free society at home, and an internationally - minded foreign policy abroad.

And we make a modest plea. The United States spends more on defence than the next nine rich countries combined, but it ranks last on a per capita basis when compared to European states on foreign aid. Rather than spending ever more money on the war on terrorism and homeland defense, why not consider other strategies such as limiting the number of our enemies. This could be done by redefining and limiting the war on terrorism, and by spending more money to try to influence people to support American policies. Such policies would better combat the scourge of terrorism in the 21st century. Unfortunately, the United States is usually reluctant to develop new methods of diplomacy and instead continually falls back on military and security organizations to get it out of trouble.

Without a return to pragmatism we will all be threatened by an increase in the very violence we are trying to prevent. Neo-imperialism will fail as all empires in the past have failed. Whoever is in power, American and British foreign policy ultimately will be driven back to a multilateral position. Even US power is finite. Hubris is repaid by nemesis.
