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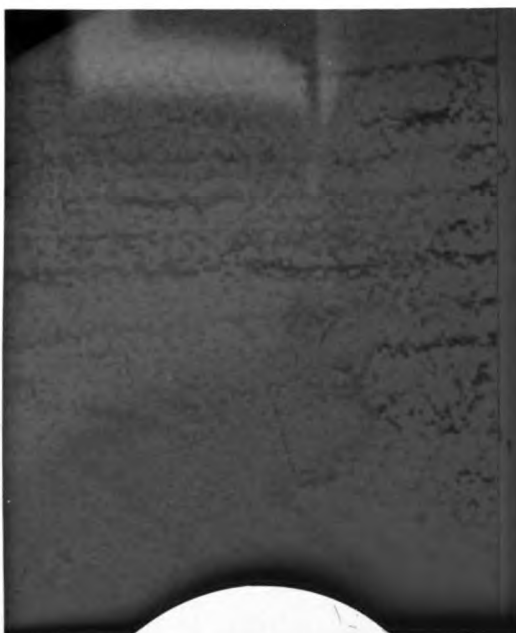
**'THE FIRST WAR OF THE 21ST CENTURY':
ASYMMETRIC HOSTILITIES AND THE
NORMS OF CONDUCT**

Coral Bell



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SDSC Working Papers

Series Editor: Helen Hookey

Published and distributed by:

Strategic and Defence Studies Centre

The Australian National University

Canberra ACT 0200

Australia

Tel: 02 62438555 Fax: 02 62480816

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*Canberra
December 2001*

**National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry**

Bell, Coral.

**The first war of the 21st century : asymmetric hostilities
and the norms of combat.**

ISBN 0 7315 5417 5.

**1. Qaida (Organization). 2. September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.
3. Terrorism - United States. 4. United States - Military relations -
Afghanistan. 5. Afghanistan - Military relations - United States.
I. Australian National University. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre.
II. Title. (Series : Working paper (Australian National
University. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre) ; no. 364).**

973.931

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'The First War of the 21st Century': Asymmetric Hostilities and the Norms of Combat

Coral Bell

Like a thunderbolt out of a clear blue sky, the attacks of 11 September 2001 instantly transformed the atmosphere of international politics and, more particularly, strategic assumptions about the likely nature and diplomatic repercussions of asymmetric hostilities. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, from 1946 to 1989, the most dangerous of the war-bearing crises were those between the two Europe-centred alliance systems, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In the multipolar worlds of the 19th and early 20th centuries, major wars tended to involve more fluid groups of allies and adversaries. But the challenge to the paramount power of the day (Britain for most of that period) would normally have come from a sovereign state, or more likely an alliance of sovereign states. What is unique since 11 September is that a truly dangerous challenge to the paramount power, the US, has come from 'a non-state actor'¹, the al-Qa'ida terrorist group.

Of course non-state actors have precipitated many sets of hostilities in the past. Of the 25 conflicts being actively waged by military or quasi-military means at the end of the 20th century, 23 were internal or intra-state wars, conducted on one side by non-state actors, like the Chechens in Chechnya, or the Albanians in Macedonia, or the 'real IRA' in Britain, or the ETA in Spain, or the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. So it was unconvincing to argue - as a few commentators did just after the attacks of 11 September on New York and Washington - that those attacks could not be called acts of war, because they were not the work of a sovereign state, or a legitimate government. By definition, a unipolar world, as at present, is one in which no other state or alliance of states has the military and economic capacity to challenge the paramount power. If your chosen adversary is Achilles, fully armed, and you have no chance of success in direct open combat, your obvious option is to look for Achilles' heel. And, unfortunately, al-Qa'ida found it.

The concept of asymmetric war had begun to worry western strategists some years earlier, not long after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union had removed the only fully capable conventional potential challenger to US military power. (China is not yet in that category, except in the minds of a few far-right analysts in Washington.) But the threat was expected to come from what were then called 'rogue states': North Korea, Iraq and a few others.

In retrospect, it should have been realised that a non-state actor could be a

more likely source. Even the most autocratic and fanatical of states has assets that can be put at risk - its cities, for instance - if it provokes serious rage and hostility in the people and government of the United States. And even the decision-makers currently in power in North Korea and Iraq may in the long run be held accountable to their respective peoples if they bring too great a disaster upon the country. But al-Qa'ida, as a non-state actor, could dare anything, because it has no fixed assets that can be held at risk. Its members are not necessarily or predominantly Afghanis: they are a highly cosmopolitan group from all over the Islamic world - Saudis, Emiratis, Algerians, Egyptians, Tunisians, Pakistanis, Chechens and young people from Islamic groups in the Western world. Their attachment is to a cause, not a country. So they could regard the Afghanis, among whom they lived, as just shields and hostages.

Moreover, some will flit like shadows from Afghanistan once it becomes necessary. And some are obviously Westernised enough to fit into Western contexts like Boston or Frankfurt or London or Florida without attracting undue notice, as those who carried out and organised the attacks of 11 September obviously did. So the fact that the threat did not come from a sovereign state (certainly not from one as chaotic and impoverished as Afghanistan) made it more, not less, difficult to cope with. In particular, it raised still more qualms than usual about civilian deaths. Even the Taliban, who are mostly Afghans from the Pushtun tribes, were not really the enemy. Nor were they the government of Afghanistan: merely the more successful (at the time of the crisis) of the two groups of warring tribes who have been fighting to control Afghanistan since the overthrow of the last recognised government of that long-distressed country.

Only Pakistan at the time of fighting recognised the Taliban as a government. The UN awarded Afghanistan's seat to the last government, headed by President Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose connections are with the Northern Alliance or United Front, supported mostly by the minority tribes (Uzbeks, Turkmen, Hazaras and Tajiks). So the Western political strategy has been to help into place an interim regime, supervised by the UN, but headed by a Pushtun and partly grouped around the old king, since he is from a Pushtun dynasty, and may be able to attract to his banner both Pushtun tribes from the Taliban, and minority tribes from the Northern Alliance. Tribal chiefs in Afghanistan can change sides as readily as feudal barons in the wars of medieval Europe.

President Bush and his allies have been entirely right to insist that the enemy is not Islam, otherwise there would have been even more attacks on peaceful local Muslim citizens. And moreover it is vital that the Muslim soci-

eties of the current coalition be convinced on that point, since their strategic cooperation (especially Pakistan's) remains vital. Nevertheless, this is in some ways a war of contending norms, and understanding that normative conflict in the balance of forces is necessary to any serious strategic or diplomatic analysis. Otherwise the psychological drive and political motivation of bin Laden's followers (who were his chief military asset) becomes inexplicable. Bin Laden himself had long been quite candid about his motivation and intentions. In a fatwa, originally in Arabic, of February 1998 he made them clear:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies - civilian and military - is an individual duty for any Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa mosque [in Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [in Saudi Arabia] from their grip. We - with God's help - call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it.²

In an interview with Peter Arnett for CNN in 1997, he had been almost as forthcoming:

We have declared jihad against the US because in our religion it is our duty to make jihad so that God's word is the one exalted to the heights and so that we drive the Americans away from all Moslem lands ...³

An important point from this interview is that he had interpreted the American withdrawal from Somalia after the brief intervention of 1992-93 (begun in the elder President Bush's time and withdrawn in President Clinton's) as meaning that the Americans are militarily 'paper-tigers':

They left after some resistance from powerless, poor, unarmed people where only weapon is their belief in Allah the Almighty.⁴

Presumably he told his followers in Afghanistan that much the same thing would happen there, but the American mood was transformed by the attacks of 11 September. No vital American interest was involved in Somalia, and somewhat secondary ones in Bosnia and Kosovo. So in those conflicts the deployment of American troops became gradually dominated by the 'force protection norm', which will be further discussed later. All that changed, once it was a matter of 'homeland defence'. For the first time since Pearl Harbour there had been an attack on American soil. The trauma and the death toll were greater than in that 1941 strategic turning point, then crucial to Australia. So, unfortunately was the economic damage, not only to the US but the world in general. The targets in Pearl Harbour were naval and air force assets, vital to the conventional war then launched by Japan, but not central to the economic life of the country in the way airlines, insurance, tourism and financial services now are for the whole world.

To my mind it would have been preferable to define the target as al-Qa'ida, ('the base') rather than bin Laden himself: he may have been its spokesman and financial backer, but the real strategist and organiser within the group was reported to be an Egyptian surgeon, Ayman al-Zawahiri. The amount of publicity bin Laden has been given has already made him the Che Guevara of the Islamic revolutionaries, a martyr and patron saint for future generations of them.

The more expansive definition of the campaign as 'a war on terrorism', though politically useful, needs to be taken with a grain or two of salt. No one is expecting 'the real IRA', or ETA. in Spain, or the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka to be early targets. The Middle Eastern groups are a bit different, since they may have links with bin Laden, and they may be dangerous to the Arab leaders of the coalition, even to Arafat. Washington seems so far to have done as well as could have been expected in preventing the campaign from being seen as 'a war of civilisations' in Huntington's⁵ sense, though unfortunately it is likely to still seem that way to many Muslims. To my mind, it is actually more like the 'world establishment' (i.e., a league of most existing sovereign states) defending itself against the most lethal of its potential enemies, the jihadists.

Though it may be politically incorrect to use that Islamic word, it is the one their own spokesmen insist upon, as in this quotation from Sheik Omar abd ar Rahman, the Muslim cleric jailed in connection with the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center: 'do jihad with the sword, with the cannon, with the missile ... to break and destroy the enemies of Allah ... their high world buildings which they are proud of, and the buildings, in which they gather their leaders. God the Almighty will facilitate the believers to penetrate their lines, no matter how strong they are.'⁶ A chilling prescription for what actually was tried, eight years on, in September 2001. But as many Islamic scholars have pointed out, the true meaning of jihad is the internal struggle of the believer to live according to the tenets of the Prophet. The Koran shares with the Old and New Testaments the ability to mean many things to many people.

The distinction between what I shall call the jihadists and the many other terrorist groups to whom the world has become dismally accustomed over the past few decades is that the others are usually in search of what Margaret Thatcher called 'the oxygen of publicity' rather than mass casualties, which they realise are likely to alienate people from their respective causes. Mostly they seek to secure domestic political attention to (and thus secure change in) some quite *local* power structure or territorial disposition.

In Northern Ireland, for instance, or Aceh, or Irian Jaya, or Tibet, or Kashmir, or Chechnya.

The jihadists aspire to much more than that. They may want primarily to change the power structure and political norms of Muslim countries, starting with Saudi Arabia (their Holy Land) and Palestine. But they perceive, correctly enough, that the present political structures in many such Muslim societies depend in the last analysis on American economic and military ascendancy in the world. And that in turn is the current expression of the West's ascendancy over Islam, which has lasted for the past three centuries or so. Thus the choice of the twin towers to symbolise destruction of that economic power, and the Pentagon to symbolise destruction of that military power, was consistent with their interpretation of the meaning of jihad, perverted though that interpretation may seem to many Muslims.

Until the catastrophe of 11 September 2001, the model of asymmetric war held in most analysts' minds was one far more promising for the West: Kosovo. Indeed, the US commander in charge of the air-campaign in that conflict said at the time, in a phrase that he undoubtedly now regrets, that he was 'a big fan of asymmetric war'.⁷ The meaning of the concept is simply that of hostilities in which the two sides use or have available to them radically different weaponry and strategies. Kosovo obviously fitted that definition. Belgrade used an 'up close and personal' strategy to drive the Kosovars into exile or into their mountains. Basically it required as weaponry only half-trained militia in trucks with rifles and machine-guns. The NATO powers waged 'distance warfare' almost solely dependent on advanced aircraft and missiles. The two campaigns intersected only in the final diplomatic deal. Milosovic agreed to pull his troops out of Kosovo and allow NATO land forces to enter 'a permissive environment' (i.e. without combat) when he judged that the air-campaign against Serbia (not the fighting in Kosovo) had effected a degree of destruction and discomfort there that was beginning to erode his own political base. Even the fervent Serb nationalists who had elected him and backed him for ten years, through the campaigns against Slovenia and Bosnia, seemed likely to begin to doubt whether driving the Kosovars out of Kosovo (no matter how historically significant that province was) could be worth the destruction of Serbia itself.

So an asymmetric war was ended, after 78 days, by a diplomatic deal with no combat casualties among the NATO troops. But that precedent should not be allowed to look unduly reassuring for campaigns like that in Afghanistan. Whether asymmetric war favours the stronger side (as in Kosovo) or the weaker depends on the circumstances and the terrain. The method of

military pressure used on Belgrade - destruction of the fixed assets which Serbia needed and depended upon, like power stations, communications media, bridges, roads and so on had only indirect relevance⁸ to Afghanistan. In the rather chilling jargon, it is 'a target-poor environment'. And the most vital decision-maker was not an old Communist apparatchik like Milosovic, whose value system was quite familiar to the Western diplomats who had been dealing with him (on and off) for ten years. It was not even bin Laden, or the almost unknown cleric, Mullah Mohammed Omar. Ultimately, the military outcome seems to have derived from convincing the tribal leaders who had been supporting him that their interests might be better served by the other side.

If the main military assets of the jihadists were a remote inaccessible base, religious zealotry, organisational secrecy and enough funds to establish cells in many countries, the main military asset of the US initially proved to be diplomatic: its ability to induce 'bandwagoning' by many countries. Old allies like NATO members Australia and Japan were to be expected. Even the Muslim governments were not surprising: few of them want to see themselves violently replaced by fundamentalist theocracies like the Taliban. Iran may still be a theocracy, despite the efforts of President Khatami, but its people are mostly Shia, and the Taliban are Sunni, and have been persecuting their own Shia minority, the Hazaras, so the Iranians support the Northern Alliance, a crucial Western ally despite its past record.

The really vital 'outsiders', however, were Russia and the ex-Soviet republics. President Putin's cooperation ensured that of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, which provided access from the north. That in turn was essential to take a little of the heat off Pakistan, whose government's dangers were the most acute. Even before the attacks of 11 September, experts in the region's affairs were worrying about the possibility of Pakistan itself being 'Talibanised'. And Pakistan is a nuclear power: if that threat appeared close, the US and India would face enormous decisions.

China, like Russia, has problems of its own with Muslim fundamentalists in Central Asia, so perhaps its endorsement also was not surprising. The degree of cordiality between President Jiang and President Bush at the APEC meeting in Shanghai in October was, however, quite a diplomatic achievement, considering the sharp frictions just a few months earlier over Taiwan and the Hainan Island plane. In fact the Shanghai meeting, ostensibly to talk of trade, but actually serving mostly to allow the chief decision-makers of the US, Russia, China, Japan and Indonesia to compare notes on their security concerns, may turn out to be an important diplomatic milestone in the evolution of global relationships.

There is one reassuring precedent from Kosovo. The asymmetric war over that tiny province proved a catalyst for much wider diplomatic and political changes. The political culture of Serbia took a far more hopeful turn, with the fall of Milosovic. NATO established, in effect, a sort of military protectorate (with UN legitimation) over most of the Balkan area, which had so long been the breeding-ground of wars. And the European Union took the area under its economic wing, in a way it had never previously contemplated. That pattern cannot be fully hoped for in Afghanistan, but at least it indicates a possible path forward for that ill-fortuned country, if the internal factions can be reconciled. The Balkans had rich neighbours in Europe: Afghanistan has rich neighbours in the Gulf. And the world has had no end of a lesson in the kind of dangers that can come out of a society left in poverty and disarray.

As the Afghan cities fell to Northern Alliance troops and local warlords in mid-November 2001, strategists were assuming that the hard core of the Taliban, along with al-Qa'ida, would be preparing to fight a guerrilla campaign from their boltholes in the mountains. Soviet troops had faced that situation in the early 1980s, and not done well with it. But there were some vital differences. Moscow was then anxious to keep hold of Afghanistan; Washington will be anxious to pull its troops out as soon as it is possible to put in the projected multinational peacekeeping force, and an interim government with some promise of stability. So the emphasis has shifted to political effort among the 50-plus diverse and quarrelsome tribal leaders - Pushtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras and others. Afghanistan's neighbours, especially Pakistan, in effect had to acquiesce in whatever was devised. And Afghanistan will need both domestic institutions and armed forces strong enough to prevent any comeback by al-Qa'ida or the Taliban. So a long task, but a constructive one, lies ahead of the international community. As Henry Kissinger once said, any success in this sort of problem is just an entrance-ticket to more difficult problems.

Wars and Norms

Though the attacks of September 2001, and the developments that followed, may stand as a text book case of asymmetric hostilities, their history cannot be fully written as yet. Let us therefore revert to the general questions of why hostilities are likely to remain asymmetric, and what consequent changes are occurring in the norms of combat.

The three great hegemonial conflicts of the 20th century - World War I, World War II and the Cold War, which may be regarded as a form of World War III - were all relatively 'symmetrical' conflicts, in the sense that the adversaries in each case had relatively similar weapons and strategies avail-

able to them. Most of the wars of the 19th century, the colonial wars which the European powers fought in Asia and Africa, were however asymmetrical, in that the Europeans had superior weapons and strategies to the forces they were meeting, even in the case of very large powers like China, or ones with a strong traditional military caste, like the samurai in Japan. Afghanistan was a conspicuous area of failure then for Britain, and later for the Soviet Union, and that memory may have proved a useful warning against any recent impulse to a direct 'bull-at-the-gate' conventional attack against the Taliban forces. So must, in Washington, the memory of Vietnam, which began as asymmetric war; the forces that looked to Hanoi initially relying on a low-tech guerrilla strategy and those that looked to Washington relying on the conventional advanced weaponry of the time. Victory eventually went to the side that initially looked much the weaker, a sobering reflection. All the major decision-makers in Washington at present are of an age to remember Vietnam, and the Secretary of State was a young officer there. That must be an asset now: they all know well what a stream of body-bags coming back home can do to domestic political life in the US. Even given the change of American mood, they must still be wary of any repetition.

One of the obvious normative changes occasioned by that bitter experience was the Pentagon's development of the 'force protection norm', which was so notably successful in Kosovo (no combat deaths at all among the 50,000 NATO troops) almost as successful in Afghanistan and relatively successful also in the Gulf War: only about 300 combat deaths among the coalition troops, when many more had been initially expected. The Pentagon was reported at the time to have placed on order for 10,000 body bags.

By the time of Kosovo (1999) the force protection norm was a vital political necessity for President Clinton. He faced hostile majorities in both houses of Congress, a public not at all convinced that Kosovo was of national importance to the US, the shadow of impeachment, and the fact that even though conviction was avoided, his Presidency was already close to its 'lame-duck' period. Political necessity in Washington became diplomatic necessity for the NATO alliance as a whole, because otherwise the media and opposition in the other NATO countries could have accused their respective governments of being less careful of the lives of their national troops than Washington was of the lives of American troops. And that might have blown the alliance apart.

Will that norm stand, in the light of the changed US mood and circumstances? I am inclined to believe that it will, despite risking a dent or two in Afghanistan. The reasons are both demographic and technological. The Western world has already passed the 'demographic transition point' be-

tween high birth and death rates, and low birth and death rates. Fertility rates in most Western countries are already well below reproduction level (2.1). The average in Europe is about 1.4 (the US is still somewhat higher), which means most families have only one or two children. The large families of Victorian England, for instance, which could endure sending a son or two out to die in the navy or Afghanistan, in the cause of building or defending the Empire, are long a thing of the past. Parents with only one or two children, as is now the norm, are going to be very resentful of politicians who put them in harm's way through military action, unless truly vital national interests are at risk. The crowds of student protesters who helped turn public opinion against the Vietnam war could now be joined by equal numbers of middle aged mothers and fathers, anxious for their sons and daughters. And those sons and daughters themselves have career opportunities, which the armed services find it hard to compete with. So recruitment is becoming a problem, even in the well paid US professional military.

The technology of distance warfare is clearly going to be the main Western solution to the strategic problems posed by the demographic and economic changes which Western society has already experienced, but which are still some decades in the future for most Islamic, South Asian and African societies. (Most East Asian societies have entered the demographic transition, and Japan has completed it.) The technological changes of the 'revolution in military affairs' are much more advanced in the American services than in even its closest NATO allies. That is why some 78 per cent of the effective air-strikes in the Kosovo campaign were by the US. Indeed Kosovo, rather than the Gulf War or the Afghanistan campaign, may stand as the success marker of that kind of strategy.⁹ Before the 11 September attacks, President Bush and his Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld were intent on a profound strategic review of the US armed forces, which seemed likely to take the US defence establishment even further in the 'high-tech' direction, with what had come to be called 'the revolution after next'. Missile defences were the most publicised element in that project. They have of course been put on the back burner since 11 September, but will not necessarily stay there forever. The current efforts to block the more obvious loopholes in the US 'homeland defences' system, like security for civilian aircraft, crop dusters and truck bombs, will presumably push the jihadists to look to more 'high-tech' modes of attack. Bin Laden is reported to have already, in the late 1990s, sought to acquire a nuclear war-head or a suitcase bomb' from a renegade Soviet general. So missile defences, once the current crisis is over, are likely to be back on the agenda. At the APEC meeting in Shanghai in 2001, and later in Washington and Texas Presidents Bush and Putin discussed, among other things, strategic and defensive missile agreements. But all US strategists are of course familiar

with the problems both high-tech distance warfare and conventional direct attack encounter in conflicts where the adversary can retreat into his mountains or jungles. So the immediate emphasis will be on special forces, and any technology that might offer them an advantage in such environments. The attack on the USS *Cole* in Aden Harbour in 2000 was the first operation by 'non-state actors' to evoke widespread US use of the term 'asymmetric war', though bin Laden had already been credited with the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.¹⁰

To return to the question of normative shift, its most obvious earlier instance in 20th-century strategic decision-making was the near obliteration of the old and basic distinction between combatants and non-combatants. The bombing campaigns of both sides during World War II (culminating in the great firestorms in Tokyo and Dresden, and the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) may with luck prove to be the point at which a retreat from that strategy became at least distantly visible. Mass bombing of cities could be avoided in the Gulf War and Kosovo because the new weaponry made possible a more discriminating choice of targets. Of course, even if your aim is to destroy only fixed assets useful to the other side's pursuit of the war - like power stations, bridges, communication facilities and so on - there will always be civilians in or near such assets, so there will always be casualties. And even 'smart' bombs will sometimes be targeted in error. But one aspect of the so-called 'CNN effect' has been to create popular revulsion against, for instance, the sight on nightly TV of the results of bombs on Baghdad or Belgrade or Afghanistan. It was said at the time of Kosovo that if Milosovic had not made a deal when he did, Western publics could not have much longer endured the sight of the Western campaign. No doubt many Americans and others felt, in the first few days after the attacks on New York and Washington, that flattening Kabul and Kandahar would be an appropriate reprisal. But actual policy was cautious and measured, and Western spokesmen have been more apologetic about the relatively low civilian casualties in Afghanistan than their predecessors would have dreamed of being about the mass slaughters of civilians in Japan in 1944-45. That is an indication of normative shift, as are the considerable movements of mass opinion in many countries against weapons of mass destruction (WMD), whether nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological. Also against weapons which go on killing (or disabling) after the hostilities are over, like landmines and maybe cluster bombs or depleted uranium shells.

When one reflects on the strategies of World War I, which killed millions of young men pointlessly in the 'meatgrinder' of the trenches, or the strategies of World War II, which killed civilians by the million in firestorms and carpet bombing in great cities, one is bound to feel that the strategies of the

Cold War (which avoided direct hostilities), and the concept of limited war-aims have a good deal to be said for them.

As against that, the sight of civilians killing civilians by means of crashing hijacked passenger jets into skyscrapers may seem to represent a new low in the moral chaos of war. It is, however, not actually new, except in the particular modes used, nor does it always rely on sophisticated means. The great massacres in Rwanda in 1994, which may have killed as many as 800,000 people, were largely perpetrated by neighbours killing neighbours with machetes, clubs and butchers' knives, with even priests and nuns joining in the slaughter, though both sides were nominally Christian. Indeed, at least 75 per cent of the dead in the wars of the 20th century were civilians, so one might say that the distinction between combatants and non-combatants has been more or less lost in the actual conduct of war, though it still survives in the laws of war.

That brings up a distinction that should always be borne in mind between the laws of war and the norms of war. Lawyers are sometimes inclined to speak as if they were the same, but the derivation of the word 'norm' makes the distinction clear. It is from the Latin for a carpenter's set-square. The set-square tells the carpenter what a right angle is 'expected and required' to be: a practical, down-to-earth guide in a practical craft. A social norm defines expected and required behaviour *in a particular society at a particular time*. It varies very widely, of course, between societies: behaviour in accordance with the social norms of New York would get you stoned to death in Afghanistan. Norms and laws are sometimes in conflict, and when that is the case the norm rather than the law is likely to prevail. The most familiar instance is the US effort in the 1920s to prohibit alcohol. The laws that were then enacted enshrined for many Americans a moral or even a religious principle. But the eschewing of alcohol never became a norm - 'expected and required behaviour' - for most Americans. So the law failed.

Something like that happens in international and strategic affairs. The UN puts together a convention on, for instance, human rights, and enough governments sign and ratify for it to become international law. But it does not necessarily become a norm - 'expected and required behaviour' - even for the societies whose governments have signed up, much less those who have not done so. What is happening at the moment is that the US and its allies are attempting to create and enforce an international norm for the whole society of states against the sponsoring or tolerating of terrorism by governments, or the sheltering of those who practise it. The Taliban, as was pointed out earlier, were not actually a government, though they were in *de facto* control of much of Afghanistan. Their overthrow in the course of the

recent hostilities could be regarded as the military enforcement of the proposed norm, and no doubt many governments will take note of it. But only time will tell whether the norm can be maintained. There are going to be considerable difficulties in distinguishing between dissident or separatist movements with a legitimate case (like the Kurds or the Chechens or the Tibetans) whose members may not always stick to peaceful modes of action, as against really murderous groups like al-Qa'ida. But these distinctions no doubt will re-emerge now the hostilities are over.

Finally, it is reassuring to note that the Western campaign can be readily squared with the oldest Western norms of combat, the 'just war' doctrine of around the 5th century AD. War, to be just, requires 'a legitimate authority' (a Security Council resolution), a 'just cause' (an attack on home territories out of the blue), a 'right intention' (to demolish a terrorist network), 'proportionate means' (avoidance of weapons of mass destruction). Further, the prospect of success must be reasonable (as it was) and the final outcome must be better than if no action were taken. (It should be, even for the unfortunate Afghanis, provided the society of states supplies adequate reconstruction aid, and the internal factions can learn to live together.)

Notes

1. That rather clumsy term is the only one, unfortunately, which covers the whole range of international organisations which are powerful enough to be 'actors' in the realm of international politics, but which are not controlled or sponsored by recognised governments. Most of them are entirely benign in their purposes: the Red Cross, Greenpeace, Amnesty and so on. Even those who are not benign mostly confine their attacks to local objectives. Al-Qa'ida is historically unique in the level of damage and destruction (especially on the economic front world-wide) that it managed to inflict. The nearest military analogy would be with the 'Black Hand' in Europe in the period before World War I. Some historians have credited that group with complicity in the Sarajevo assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, which precipitated (though did not cause) World War I. But that view now is controversial.
2. I owe this quotation to an article by Steven Simon and David Benjamin 'America and the New Terrorism', published in *Survival* for Spring 2000 (Vol. 24, No.1), more than a year before the attacks of 11 September 2001.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996.
6. *Survival*, loc.cit.
7. See an interview with General Michael Short in the *US Air Force Magazine* for September 1999.
8. Though the Taliban were not much dependent on fixed assets in the usual sense, the troops did of course need supplies of ammunition, food and fuel for vehicles. Their very sudden collapse in mid-November 2001 in Kabul and other cities may have been because US bombing cut off those supplies, or because the casualties caused by the bombing, along with those caused by the Northern Alliance, rendered retreat necessary. But on the evidence at the time of writing, it seems mostly to have been due to the desertion of the tribal chiefs who had previously been supporting them.
9. On the ground that the contribution of local land forces was clearly more vital to the success of the campaign in Afghanistan than the relatively minor contribution of the KLA. in Kosovo.
10. For an alternative view of asymmetric war, see Ivan Arreguin-Toft 'How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict' in *International Security* for Summer 2001, Vol.26, No.1.

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