

What follows is an annotated version of an article written by Geoffrey Demarest and published by the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 2004. Most of it he wrote late in 2003. We did not change any of the original text, including its typos and clumsy syntax. We just added a little helpful criticism. Mostly the ideas have held up pretty well. The Liberty Bristles comments are in this bold green Calibri font and bracketed []. Geoff, if you are not aware, is an alter ego who works for the government. Read his NOT-A-GOVERNMENT-OPINION disclaimer on the header of the original article on the FMSO webpage. Obviously, none of what follows in green has any relationship to the US government. -- Holmes Oliver

Organized Brigandage and the Structure of Life: The Top Ten Threats to America

[We wish it had been titled simply, "The Top Ten Threats to America." Someone might have read it.]

by Dr. Geoffrey Demarest,
Foreign Military Studies Office¹
Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Classifying and comparing dangers is never an idle exercise because efficient counters are more likely devised if they are informed by accurate descriptions. While the most horrific events of current history may be the product of sociopath extortionists, terrorism is just a detail of their behavior. Pandora's box has woes in it more dreadful than terrorism. One nasty item, included in the title to this essay, imposes an unavoidable requirement and an uncomfortable dilemma. That item we call *organized brigandage*, a term inspired by a fifth-century observation made by St. Augustine:

In the absence of justice, what is sovereignty but organized brigandage? For, what are the bands of brigands but petty kingdoms? They also are groups of men, under the rule of a leader, bound together by a common agreement, dividing their booty according to a settled principle. If this band of criminals, by recruiting more criminals, acquires enough power to occupy regions, to capture cities, and to subdue whole populations, then it can with fuller right assume the title of kingdom, which in the public estimation is conferred upon it, not by the renunciation of greed, but by the increase of impunity. The answer which a captured pirate gave to Alexander the Great

¹ The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), is a US Army research organization located at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas and belonging to the Army's Training & Doctrine Command, TRADOC. FMSO's mandate includes scholarly research on emerging threats. The author of this article can be contacted at demaresg@Leavenworth.army.mil. **That address for the author is no longer good, but a version of the original article is still available on the FMSO website site. Given the crude state of the citations, the version on the FMSO website was probably a pre-final working draft that was found and used to replace the document at some time during the life of the site. We will in time try to find currently valid URLs or otherwise complete citations where it looks like that might help the current reader.**

was perfectly accurate and correct. When that king asked the man what he meant by infesting the sea, he boldly replied: ‘What you mean by warring on the whole world. I do my fighting on a tiny ship, and they call me a pirate; you do yours with a large fleet, and they call you a Commander.’²

The dilemma was thus defined for us fifteen hundred ears ago – the United States must not let the world’s terrorists acquire power enough to subdue populations, but at the same time it must not act in such a way that it appears no better morally than did Alexander to the pirate.

Probably meant years and not ears. Unfortunately, right after asserting that ‘Pandora’s box has woes in it more dreadful than terrorism’, Demarest slouched back to implying that the overarching category of threats is the ‘world’s terrorists.’ He maybe should have stuck with brigands, with the proviso that brigands can organize under the guise of unions, clergies, guerrillas, movements, corporations, research units, governments and so on. Also, the list that follows includes more than brigands, so, all in all, this paragraph needs some work. Still, nice quote, and one that has not lost a bit of relevance in fifteen hundred ears.

The Top Ten Threats to America

The laundry list provided below is prompted by modus operandi, or method of attack, rather than by the identity of perpetrators or their motivations. Terms such as “Moslem Fundamentalism” or “Narcoguerrilla” do not appear. Membership on the list requires hostile intent, so nature, unintended consequences of poor stewardship thereof, and dangerous but peacefully intended technologies are all excluded. These phenomena, while admittedly issues for national security, do not invoke the human competitive wile that is the focus of this particular essay. Additionally, it is supposed that the occurrence of threatening behaviors can be positively correlated with the absence of basic conditions of human prosperity and fulfillment. That is to say, failure of societies to meet what the National Security Strategy of the United States refers to as the non-negotiable demands of human dignity correlates geographically and organizationally with behaviors and attitudes that present a security threat to the United States and its allies.³ Places where basic rights are not observed are often places where dangers to the United States are spawned. Therefore, behaviors such as tyranny and corruption, even while perhaps motivated in isolation from any attitude toward America, Americans or American culture, indirectly contribute to the dangers listed here.

Tough for me to disagree with any of the above, but Demarest should have been more careful with this paragraph. ‘Socio-economic causation arguments are generally weak for three reasons. One: Almost anything and everything can be categorized under ‘socio-economic’. Two: Many readers interpret ‘socio-economic factors’ as ‘poverty’. Even widespread abject poverty is probably not a very powerful motivator or incubator of anti-Americanism, at least not outside the presence of a lot else.

² Saint Augustine, The City of God (edited by Vernon J. Bourke and translated by Gerald G. Walsh, Demetrius B. Zema, Grace Monahan, and Daniel J. Honan) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 88.

³ Bush George, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2002) p. 3. The listed non-negotiable demands are the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property.

Three: Invocations of socio-economic causation lead subliminally (actually, they often lead directly and loudly) to an argument that by improving underlying socio-economic condition (of poverty, mostly) in foreign areas, the threat to America will be accordingly relieved. There is little evidence of that being true. Demarest alludes in this piece to the ‘four freedoms’ (see footnote 32), but was haphazard in suggesting indirectly that Rooseveltian ‘freedom from want’ somehow threw want into the status of threat or created a state responsibility.

Items on the list are ordered according to urgency, enormity and consequence. While the items have some individual character, their substance is commingled, co-occurring and co-dependent. Listing helps explain the concert, but that same explanation rejects any independent status of the list’s parts. **Sweet paragraph, including correct use of the word *enormity*.**

10. Anti-American Pastime
9. Abuse and Misuse of International Law
8. Offensive Migration
7. Grand Felony
6. Terrorism
5. Attacks by Weapons of Mass Destruction
4. Organized Brigandage
3. Conventional Military Force
2. Math Assault
1. Irony

The list has proven more-or-less durable, accurate and complete.

10. Anti-American Pastime

Anti-Americanism is as much attitude as it is action, and while often capricious, it is practiced almost everywhere. Perhaps manifested only indirectly or subliminally, it compels persons who find it amusing, if not righteous, to tweak America, and to sponsor anti-American causes and movements. If they can throw America off balance, cause loss of American face or self-confidence, it is to them innocent sport. They welcome a little insult to satisfy a simple competitive preference for the underdog, or perhaps to ease resentment for past offenses, or even past favors that rankle because they remind of America’s relative strategic success. Not only does the sport motivate Internet contributions, it tilts a world of passive-aggressive petty bureaucratic decisions at embassies, foreign ministries, international organizations, and NGOs. It can serve the purposes of populism and demagoguery without depending on any internal logic or strategic agenda. While it can be immediately pleasing even in impromptu form, it can nevertheless be directed and organized. During the recent Iraq war, it allowed news media around the world to “balance” reports from journalists traveling with the Anglo-American military with reports from the Iraqi Ministry of Information, these latter given credence even

when they were wildly improbable. Today, anti-Americanism continues to be electronically transmuted, and aggregated, into human and financial resources available for concerted demonstrations and violent action.⁴ For some people, it both fuels and validates a powerful theme -- St. Augustine's condemnation of the great sovereign (by extrapolation the United States) as being little better morally than the pirates by whom it is plagued. Criticism is not an enemy, especially well-meant, but when anti-American sentiment is grown for its own sake and wielded as a strategic weapon, it helps motivate all the other threats.

When Demarest wrote this he had not read or was yet aware of Revel, Jean François, *Anti-Americanism*, (New York: Encounter Books, 2003). Revel expresses the idea better than Demarest does, and I recommend his work.

9. Abuse of International Law

From unfriendly and unscrupulous pens, international law is the most powerful expression of the Anti-Americanism just noted. Aggressive use of international law threatens not only US interests, but also any civilizing development of international law itself. International law has a quality and power beyond the written aggregate of public and private international statutes, regulations, treaties, conventions, and customs we search to *find* the law. There is sufficient inconsistency within that written body to cause a world of conflict, but it is the law beyond the writing that disquiets. In a recent explanation of domestic American law, Alan Korwin states,

Once you cross the line from law-abiding (or unnoticed) to law breaking (or at least charged as such), the meaning of the law is a whole new game. Injected into the court system, the written law plays only a small role in your fate. Rules of evidence, procedural rules, get-tough policies which may be in effect just then – or not, how crowded the courts are and with what, deals you can make in the hallways and back rooms (called plea bargains), the personalities of the players – from the arresting officer to the clerks, to your defense team, if any... the law, what it says, what it means, and how it is enforced and interpreted in light of every court precedent currently set, these all affect you in concert to comprise “the law.”⁵

Fate in an international court is all the more disconnected from written law. International law becomes propaganda, and legal procedure gamesmanship.

Mention of a few recent trends in public international law suffices to outline the danger. The growth of extraterritoriality, or erosion of the principle of territorial jurisdiction, is a direct product of high profile human rights outrage cases.⁶ China's Li Peng, Zimbabwe's Robert

⁴ See Dan Springer, contributor, “Anti-War Protests Have Big Price Tags,” *FoxNews*, Tuesday, March 18, 2003, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,81314,00.html>; Adam Garfinkle, “The Spirit of the New Antiwar Movement,” *E-Notes*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 24, 2003.

⁵ Alan Korwin, *Gun Laws of America* (Phoenix: Bloomfield Press, 1999) p. 6.

⁶ See Pat M. Holt, “The push for human rights could hurt Americans,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 2, 2001 online at <http://csmweb2.emcweb.com/durable/2001/08/02/p9s2.htm>; Henry Kissinger, “The Pitfalls of Universal Jurisdiction” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2001. This article can be found in its entirety online at http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Kissinger/Pitfalls_Univ_Juris_Kis.html

Mugabe, Chile's Augusto Pinochet, Israel's Ariel Sharon, and the United State's Henry Kissinger are among the better-recognized names that have been the subject of efforts to extradite and prosecute under the new tolerance for assertions of global jurisdiction by local courts.

Unfortunately, it is practically impossible to challenge or punish the misuse of international criminal procedure, and it is correspondingly likely that further acceptance of extraterritoriality will lead to its use against Americans, most of whom will have less stature and defensive resource than Mr. Kissinger. In order to give prosecutorial reach and administrative agility to the concept of global jurisdiction, however, many internationally minded jurists promote the development of the International Criminal Court.⁷ While the ICC might one day emerge as an important civilizing tool, it is difficult to see how such a court could meet basic standards of equal protection and due process in the face of competitive strategic pressures, especially those aimed to counterbalance or challenge the US. A complementary danger presents itself in what is loosely called the Tobin tax. The Tobin tax, named after Yale economist James Tobin, would be an international tax on trade, the collection of funds moving automatically to international organizations, particularly the UN.⁸ It would make some international organizations truly independent and empower them to field their own investigative, police, peace operation and perhaps military forces. At least that is the idea. An independently funded and armed United Nations would present a danger to US citizens engaged in the implementation of US foreign policy – leaders, diplomats, and soldiers – and more so in a context of extraterritorial, global jurisdiction.

International law developed quickly and continuously after WWII under the sponsorship of the United States. The hallmark document of international law, the United Nations Charter, has from the moment of its birth been excepted or disregarded on hundreds of occasions while respected and enforced on only a few. Within the last half decade, the United States government has taken decisions in regard to the Balkans, Iraq and other places that indicate the United Nations international security regime retains little force or credibility. It is a good thing that the development of international security law is presently stagnant. Its growth can be a danger to the United States -- at least to the extent that "law" is applied aggressively as a strategic tool or as a manifestation of generalized anti-Americanism. A dominant current of misuse within the UN defended the Saddam Hussein regime behind a guise of legalisms. Had the proscriptive suasion of international law been empowered by an independent UN budget, the UN might have been dangerous rather than exasperating. It might have become a tool for the self-interest of those states least concerned with moral principle.

⁷ See, for instance, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, <http://www.iccnw.org/>. "The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a network of well over 1,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court (ICC)."

⁸ See Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD), "The Tobin Tax: How to Make it Real- Towards a Socially Responsible and Democratic System of Global Governance." Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti (UPI) Working Paper No. 13 (1999).; Oxfam Great Britain, "Time for a Tobin Tax? Some practical and political arguments", Discussions Paper (Compiled by Heinz Stecher), <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/tobintax/tobintax.htm> (May 1999).

States' not State's. It would have been better had Demarest not even credited the United Nations Charter as 'The hallmark document of international law'. The Charter is part of the problem, as is that whole corrupt undemocratic sump of sinecures.

The US government will continue to promote the development of international law, and cannot consign it to be developed by interests and in ways antithetical to the success of the US, and of international law in general. The US and its allies must assure that international courts can evolve, and judges selected in such a way that processes can be challenged and abuse contained. Meanwhile, the US will continue to guard against the misuse of international legal regimes as state stratagems. It is hard to shake a set of precepts when they are as deeply rooted as, say, the notion of sovereignty, but the United States was born as a rejection of European insistence on the inviolability of the territorial rights of European sovereigns. It also owes its existence in part to the constant warfare that the same theory of sovereignty generated. International law, and its emblem the United Nations, has, like democracy, become a high-toned abstraction, a supposed objective, and a principle to be defended for its own sake. It needs to be pared back and put in with the rest of the tools in service to the march of civilization. Whether or not President Bush's 'non-negotiable demands of human dignity' will catch on to become principles of global behavior is to be seen, but they are bound to be more energetically pursued than the smorgasbord of competing virtues found in the International Declaration of Human Rights. Likewise, the Bush doctrine of preemptive deterrence, dangerous and at odds with the ineffectual rules of the old club of sovereigns, will gain or lose respect in accordance with how it is wielded.

Most all of this paragraph is still good. However, since it was written the word *lawfare* has entered the lexicon. It means the purposeful competitive, strategic use of laws, including as a means to weaken and disable an enemy militarily. The notion also encompasses more than just international public law, but commercial law, local civil and criminal laws, environmental and administrative laws as well. *Lawfare* is now the realm of high-end psychological warfare. The verbiage Demarest used admiring Bush's 'non-negotiable demands of human dignity' now seems innocent. The global narratives and messaging seem to have become coarser since he wrote this paper, with greater tendency toward the messianic and hyper-violent on one side, and toward national self-doubt on the other. I hope that turns around.

8. Offensive Migration

The intermediate goal of offensive migration is to fill a place with enough obedient or at least aligned co-nationals that the demography offers effective control over important business sectors, crime syndicates, or espionage networks. Eventually, plebiscites and elections can be won in the best democratic fashion, shifting sovereignty. From an American cultural perspective it may be hard to imagine such a strategy being possible, much less a reality -- and still less a designed threat against America. It is even counterintuitive to the (small-d) democrat to label as threatening an effort to peacefully form a majority political entity. The danger to peace is nevertheless sufficient if an opponent power gains a language monopoly within a criminal industry, or over a strategically relevant point on foreign ground. Panama, for instance, may be undergoing a demographic redefinition at the hands of the Chinese, possibly the result of

Chinese central planning, or a formal bureaucratic response to an attractive opportunity.⁹ The result of the 1977 Carter-Trujillo negotiations may ultimately be a Chinese colony in the middle of the Americas. Early in 2001, Li Peng, then-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said, "Panama has distinctive geographic features and is strategically located. The Chinese people are following the development of all undertakings in Panama with great interest.... China has always firmly supported the just struggle of the Panamanian people to take back the Panama Canal..."¹⁰ Panama and its canal are not the strategic jewels they once were, but within a context of global competition, any shift in the correlation of leverage means a change in the formula of advantage and disadvantage. To counterbalance United States influence and maneuver room in the Orient, it is logical that the Chinese would construct the potential to confound US ability to implement policy in the Americas. With a dominant influence over Panamanian decisions, the Chinese government could positively or negatively affect American counterdrug and counter-terror efforts, development of energy infrastructure, free trade negotiations, transparency laws, migration and banking controls, etc.

Similarly, even in the absence of an explicit strategy, Mexican politicians of every stripe may find it rewarding to support policies that further Mexicanize parts of the southwestern United States. It is difficult to articulate this phenomenon as a threat, given that it unfolds as a cultural shift that many citizens welcome. From the perspective of millions of American families, it is an interesting future, not a threatening one, in which much of the United States becomes bi-lingual or culturally Hispanic-dominated. However, seen as a change that will create political flashpoints as distinct language and property regimes attract the sponsorship of sovereign governments, the potential for unpleasantness cannot be overlooked. Smaller-scale migration can also be effective to introduce support populations necessary to conduct traditional espionage and sabotage, or to effect acts of terror.

Offensive migration can be ameliorated and slowed by migration laws, border controls and internal law enforcement. Stratagems such as the Chinese colonization of Panama require targeted diplomacy and counter-strategies. As for the epochal problem of Mexican cultural invasion, it can at least be confidently asserted that the English-only option is no longer thinkable. The United States is a bilingual country. There are, however, measures that the United States government could consider taking in order to forestall political confrontation rooted in cultural differentials. Property ownership laws, for instance, should be compared for reciprocity between Mexico and the United States, and real property records on both sides of the border should be made transparent and available. Laws relating to armed militias and vigilante groups should be reviewed and revised to favor both discipline and tolerance.

⁹ Ray Bishop An Urgent Letter to America <https://www.newsmaxstore.com/panama/>; See also Chiang Shang-chou, "China's Naval Development Strategy—Building an Offshore Defensive Naval Armed Force," *Kuang Chiao Ching* 16 December 1998, as translated in FTS19990119001585.; "Chinese Vice Premier Views Colombian Ties, Achievements," Colombian Office of the President, Internet, 16 Sep 98, FBIS FTS19980917001347.

¹⁰ Normalization of China-Panama Ties Benefits Both Peoples: Li Peng," <http://www.china.org> November 21, 2001.

In retrospect, the China-Panama example wasn't the best. Demarest did not anticipate what has since happened in the Crimea or Ukraine. He wrote, "From an American cultural perspective it may be hard to imagine such a strategy being possible." Ooof. Maybe that's right -- maybe it is still true that Americans have a hard time imagining what others see as quite likely. That includes not accepting mass migration as a strategic option. Now America's obliviousness seems odd. Demarest has since used the story of 'Bleeding Kansas' and the political populating of the Kansas Territory as a prompt for teaching the relationship among demography, strategy, democracy and place. This strategy, in other words, is neatly American by legacy. In any case, the question of migration strategy is more vivid today than when he wrote this threats thing, at least for some Europeans and some Islamists.

7. Grand Felony

Grand felony refers to crimes of strategic magnitude, but that do not involve direct use of violence. Non-violent crimes such as embezzling, distribution and sale of illegal drugs, counterfeiting, smuggling, and related business ventures induce ruthless efforts of self-protection, and are often concurrent with more violent criminality. Enron's collapse would have to be considered a grand felony the scale of which has an impact on national security. If the same kind of felonious behavior is multiplied across a whole sector of major firms, such colossal fraud is called Argentina. The explanation of Argentina's bankruptcy is varied and complicated, but it is no stretch to assert that the Argentine nation fell victim to an Enron-type of felonious assault on the value of major Argentine firms.¹¹ The felons that produced the Argentine debacle were not international terrorists or armed pirates. However, financial felons and violent gangsters slouch toward uncomfortable partnerships with each other as one set of criminals begins to depend on or extort the other for security, financing, and money laundering. It is the scope of huge-profit felonies that earns them seventh place on the list of threats. The bankruptcies of US firms, exemplified by Enron, as well as the collapse of the Argentine economy may be just the first salvo. Perhaps a harbinger, Argentina, as a result of this initially non-violent but massively felonious behavior, is far more subject to violent criminality than it was only a few years ago. Peaceful Argentine politics have also seemingly slumped back toward third-world anti-American populism.

Protection against grand felony requires transparency of records, aggressive professional auditing of large firms, as well as regulation of trading and accounting practices. The United States must set higher domestic standards for honesty in business that will further attract foreign investment, keep investment monies home and stifle opportunities for more violent criminality.

In the past dozen years there have been too many cases of grand felony to bother listing. It suffices to mention the 'Panamagate' scandal in which millions of communications were leaked that document financial corruptions spanning the globe. As for the US setting higher standards for honesty in business – we have slumped in the world standings for corruption. The more we find out about things like the Clinton Foundation, followed by the immense media and official institutional indifference, the

¹¹ See generally, Andrew Marlatt, *Economy of Errors* (New York: Random House, 2002). While a satire, the humor in the section titled "Enron Admits It's Really Argentina." is valuably disturbing.

more depressed about America-as-moral-beacon we should be. It turns out that the Argentinian, government, meanwhile, has lived up to the billing it got in this section, but Brazil and Venezuela are looking to take the Copa América of Grand Felony. The countries with the worst offenders are those overawed and overtaken by socialist regimes.

6. Terrorism

Near the middle of the threats list, terrorism is not as physically dangerous as the classic threats posed by other nation-states, or as constant and likely as organized crime. As the name implies, terrorist attacks are intended to inspire fear, are a surprise even when expected, and undermine our sense of civilization in a way other violence does not. Typically, terrorism is an action of the weak who decide they must, if they are to be of any consequence, seek advantage in ruthlessness. When intermixed in terms of sentiment, timing, and logistics with other outlaw conduct, terrorist-style action becomes supremely dangerous. When terrorist amorality combines with advanced technologies and organization -- and especially when sponsored or encouraged by formal state governments -- acts of terror rise to the stature of a principal threat. Under such conditions, terrorism can be considered a facet of interstate war.

If Al Queda is the model terrorist organization, then terrorism as a conceptual category is further complicated. Saudi Arabia seems to have played an abiding role in the establishment of fundamentalist Moslem schools around the world, perhaps as a Faustian bargain to keep radical violence at a distance, perhaps out of some measure of sympathy. It is in these schools that the majority of active Moslem terrorist leadership is nurtured and prepared for jihad. Private, and perhaps public, financial support from Saudi Arabia seems to have covered all the elements necessary to produce educated, trained, committed radical Imams prepared to empower Islam through violence. To the extent that sponsorship of Al Queda was intended to further Saudi state interests (if indeed this is the case) then American conceptions of terrorism's causes, terrorist objectives, and the required responses might have to be adjusted accordingly. At a pre-Iraq war address to an audience at the National War College, James Woolsey seconded an assertion of Johns Hopkins professor Eliot Cohen that the US is in the beginnings of World War IV (He considers the Cold War to have been WWII).¹² According to Woolsey, the WWIV enemy is not the Saudi state as such, but a three-headed beast of Islamist Shias, middle-eastern fascists, and Islamist Sunni. Woolsey's construct does not damn the Moslem world, but instead specifies a targetable selection of indocile actors and describes why they are worthy of classification as enemies.

Woolsey, and by reference, Cohen may have been mistakenly focused on the middle-east as the preeminent danger zone. The threat to Israel is palpable, but the complex threats posed from northern South America are as immane and potentially more costly to the United States. As in the Middle East, terror groups benefit from accessorial behavior on the part of established states. For instance, the Colombian FARC is a terrorist entity under any reasonable definition, and is included on the US State Department's list of terrorist organizations. Nevertheless, at

¹² James Woolsey, "World War IV" Speech given 16 November 2002, National War College, Washington, D.C.

least one European government officially rejected the State Department assessment, refusing to consider the FARC a terrorist organization, and apparently refusing therefore to freeze FARC financial assets.¹³ In the process of refusing to classify the FARC as a terrorist organization, the Swiss government reconfirmed its position of neutrality in the Colombian conflict, even while Interpol was seeking to detain FARC members.

The connection of terrorism to legitimate states, either as a tool of state foreign policy or as a side effect of indifference or appeasement, presents a mottled area for determinations of friend or foe. The United States cannot simply cite Switzerland or Saudi Arabia, for instance, as enemies; the US and these countries share wealth and find common ground on myriad matters including security. Besides, Americans have also supported Al Qaeda and more so the Colombian FARC. Public and private worlds are so intermixed, and the situations of many of the world's governments so variegated and confused that perfect policy consistency is not possible. That conceded, the trend toward terrorism becoming a standard instrument or acceptable overhead of interstate competition must be feared. The relationship of terrorist organizations to the government of Iraq may only have been one of common cause, agenda, or spiritual solidarity, but it was probably also one of interdependent and mutually supporting physical goals. In northern South America, the nexus between established government and terror should not be less worrisome. While it is clear that the current government of Colombia will not succumb to power-sharing with the FARC, the president of neighboring Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, is credibly accused of actively supporting the FARC. Chavez prized Saddam Hussein and prizes Fidel Castro among his friends, presents himself as the ordained leader of socialist revolution in Venezuela (following the Castro model) and is excitedly anti-US. If he can stabilize the precarious situation in Venezuela and consolidate power, his regime will favor and nourish the FARC.

The potentially disastrous strategic situation in northern South America has been understated as a problem for American security, partly because of the traditionally subordinate place the Western Hemisphere holds within the US foreign policy establishment, but also because of a skewed perspective coming out of the international academic and human rights communities. A formulaic drone of politicized argumentation still paints right-wing militarism as the *bete noir* of Latin American societies, this to the exclusion of other harmful “-isms” that plague the region. Analysts across the ideological spectrum are inured to the dangerous reality in the Western Hemisphere. Armed leftist radicalism is reasserting itself. The FARC in particular is not just another left-over communist guerrilla organization capable of impiety, it is an industrial-strength terror corporation with vast resources, international criminal linkages and staying power. If it is assured the sanctuary of Venezuela in addition to the solidarity it enjoys from Cuba, the FARC will become more dangerous to the United States than Al Qaeda. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, in turn, will be the homologue of Saddam Hussein.

¹³ Juan Gasparini, “Suiza Niega Bloqueo de Cuentas,” *El Tiempo Bogotá*, April 1, 2002, p. 1.; Patricia Islas, “Suiza mantendrá neutralidad en Colombia,” *swissinfo*, May 16, 2002 on line at <http://www.swissinfo.org/sen/Swissinfo.html?siteSect=105&sid=1154694>

The United States must continue and expand efforts to deny terrorists anonymity or impunity. This must be done by reconciliation of police and military intelligence cultures, and as part of that reconciliation the creation and sharing of intelligence databases that maintain information at a much greater resolution of detail than is the case today. US security and world peace now depend upon, and therefore United States foreign policy must promote, the transparency of wealth worldwide. Bank accounts, corporate interests, real estate, and their related ownership must be made completely visible. As the threat becomes increasingly diffuse, we are obliged to use advanced technologies to expose concentrations of wealth that can be transmuted into instruments of hate.

Here Demarest made a couple of mistakes. He stated "Woolsey, and by reference, Cohen may have been mistakenly focused on the middle-east as the preeminent danger zone." I am thinking that indeed they were correctly focused. Demarest was not mistaken to call out our understatement and under-appreciation of the threat coming from northern South America. Within that assertion, however, he made another mistake writing, "While it is clear that the current government of Colombia will not succumb to power-sharing with the FARC..." Awfully, it appears instead that the Colombian government has been *trying* to share power with the FARC, even against the will of the Colombian people, and for that matter the will of the Venezuelan people. The list is of modus operandi, however, not offender or perpetrator types or identities.

5. Attack by Weapons of Mass Murder

Attack by weapons of mass murder is the number 4 threat, earning its own place on the list partly because of enormity. WMM might be wielded by terrorists, but they might also be the instruments of extortion wielded by ruthless criminals, criminal governments, or even individual sociopaths. They are listed as a separate category of threat also because they have unique warning signs and employment methods that allow for specialized responses not conditioned by the general behavior of their employer. [Asia Times Online](#) briefly publicized what turned out to be a hoax, a communiqué from a supposed Bin Laden lieutenant, al-Usuquf, stating how America might be attacked and defeated. The hoax described a series of WMM attacks from small aircraft pre-positioned within the United States, the intention being to cripple the US service-based economy in the wake of multiple urban disasters. Such scenarios alarm, but widespread employment of WMM would not be easy to achieve. The nature and shape of WMM may be changing, however. Biological attack grows as a threat relative to nuclear or chemical, and effective employment of some future biological weapon may not require large capital investment or sophisticated delivery means. Other trends, such as the super-miniaturization of weapons, may cloud the future of national security as lethal weapons become harder and harder to detect, easier and easier to afford, hide, and move. Combined with the growing phenomenon of suicide culture, these trends keep the use of WMM near the top of the threats problem.

Success against the use of weapons of mass murder depends on measures taken against all other threats listed herein, to wit: global promotion of transparency in wealth records (financial and property accounts); inspection regimes; extradition and information-sharing agreements; the entire panoply of identification, persecution, and prosecution efforts; border control; and the

pursuit of technological advancements supporting all of these. Some of these constabulary requirements are being met, as is the military requirement to aggressively, physically destroy entities that display some probability of using these weapons to the detriment of the United States and its allies.

4. Organized Brigandage

The above presentation of the terrorist threat leads directly to consideration of organized thuggery, or as in this essay's title, *organized brigandage*. Organized brigandage is evil with social organization and a plan. It is cruel cousin to the disabling felony entered as number 7. Organized brigands are the master employers of terrorists, and, because they combine organizational expertise, aggregated disposable wealth and amorality, these kinds of organization are to be feared in direct relation to fear of weapons of mass murder. Bridging what is a police problem and what is military, organized brigandage straddles the cut-line between civilized-but-unlawful and uncivilized behavior.¹⁴ As corporate outlaws such as Colombia's FARC thrive, observers begin to speak of ungovernability and failed states. Physical coercion for profit is behavior wedded by the brigand to the timeless political aspiration of avoiding government regulation and taxation, and acquiring impunity for criminal acts by any means – best of all by assuming government power itself. Governments can become confused or divided by what may be seen as a question of “public safety” vice what is “national security” and so respond inappropriately. When states fail initially to confront organized crime, they risk grave errors of omission -- first simple, corrupt irresponsibility or appeasement, then on to criminal negligence - - until the state no longer has the power to contain the criminal enterprise. America normally falls victim to organized brigandage when its citizens stray into trouble abroad or because its commerce is subject to parasitism (although the history of the strategic power of the Sicilian mafia in America is not to be dismissed). Today, criminal enterprises have greater and greater global reach, and their day-to-day activities, while perhaps not reaching the dramatic level of a terrorist event, are of the same character and lead to the same result.

Returning again to the example of the Colombian FARC: the United States government recognized its terrorist character years ago, but declined until recently to explicitly help the Colombian government defeat it. Over the last decade the FARC has murdered, kidnapped, and bombed, on thousands of occasions, and is now too powerful to destroy without concerted military effort.

When successful, criminal organizations metastasize, internationalize, and politicize. They call at first for routine compromises of the law, using minor coercion, perhaps justifying themselves under a cloak of social rebellion. Their initial presence and activity rarely rises to the level of strategy and military response. When it does, it is often too late for peaceful cure. Many of

¹⁴ Sir Michael Howard recommends the medieval term *latrunculi*, used to distinguish the fight against these common enemies of mankind from wars against *legitimus hostis* or legitimate enemies. Fighting the former required less in terms of international law, often more in terms of patience and fortune. “It's not so much war it's more like a hunt,” London Times, October 2, 2001.

these organizations plague the world, and as a convenient part of their efforts to establish or feign legitimacy they often disparage, or even target, the United States. Most of the world's countries acquiesce or collaborate with these outlaw organizations to one degree or another, so US efforts to curtail outlaw finances are at times impeded by a lack of political will within governments that fear domestic political repercussions. Others simply disagree with the US view of the nature, progress, or virulence of the problem.¹⁵

Today's greatest outlaws might include outwardly licit corporations. What St. Augustine's pirate captain said to Alexander is repeated today by self-assured thugs who ask what other recourse besides violence they have if they are to compete with that caliber of robber baron exemplified by Enron or WorldCom and legitimized by western governments. Therein lies the heart of the argument of the anti-globalization movement, why stridently criminal entities such as the FARC have any support at all from the morally attuned. To further the irony, America is apparently one of the world's least globalized countries, economically speaking.¹⁶

Uppermost in America's response to the growth of organized brigandage should be business discipline and the promotion of valid corporate standards, not strategic hypocrisies. In the end, all leadership is leadership by example. There may be no other enduring method to mitigate St. Augustine's charges, to lessen the irony that the synthesis of American economic/cultural success (manifested in the multinational corporation) creates the antithesis of empowered anti-Americanism (manifested in armed, organized criminal mega-business). In the shorter term, America cannot act indifferently to the growth of thug organizations. Especially in the Western Hemisphere, where proximity to the homeland makes the danger more immediate, the US should vigorously assist its allies, militarily and otherwise, to defeat organized outlaws.

There is another, farther-reaching set of countermeasures that can be implemented and will ultimately be effective in limiting the number and power of organized outlaw criminals in the world. Anonymity, especially anonymity of wealth, must be eliminated. If individuals and organizations are to achieve any level of power sufficient to threaten the United States, they must necessarily amass wealth, and that wealth must be preserved and then converted in one way or another. Wealth records, such as land registries, aircraft registries, bank accounts, or insurance policies need to be made wholly transparent. The call for transparency of wealth should become one of the centerpieces of United States defense diplomacy in every part of the world.

There exists today a growing worldwide movement promoting transparency of wealth, the central purposes being to expose corruption and create the conditions for broad economic development. Open bank accounts and real estate records are foremost on the list for

¹⁵ P.7 Terrorist Financing Council on Foreign Relations Maurice Greenberg, chair 2002; p. 26 "...the Task Force finds that currently existing U.S. and international policies, programs, structures, and organizations will be inadequate to assure sustained results commensurate with the ongoing threat posed to the national security of the United States. Combating terrorist financing must remain a central and integrated element of the broader war on terrorism."

¹⁶ 2003 A.T. Kearney/FOREIGN POLICY Magazine Globalization Index, online at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com> The index measures a country's global links, including foreign direct investment, international travel and Internet servers. Out of a total of 62 rated countries, the United States was rated 50th in overall economic integration, 60th in international trade. Ireland soars in the index as the most globalized country in the world.

exposure. Formalizing land records, for instance, not only promotes the creation of development capital, it establishes a criminal deterrent. The threat of asset forfeiture is a powerful argument for law abidance among those who have something to lose. Creating formal, open land records shapes geographies for effective intelligence. Because land databases dovetail with other records, no one with any appreciable level of wealth will be able to act anti-socially without their wealth being subject to forfeiture, and without family, friends, passport numbers, telephone numbers, etc. all falling into the hands of law enforcement. The potentially negative consequences for personal liberty and privacy are obvious, but the expansion and formalization of ownership regimes is without doubt a long-term option for the control of dangerous behaviors.¹⁷

We noted the historical irony of arrogance coming from a dominant sovereignty causing it to be considered no better than a brigand, according to the assertion of Alexander's pirate foe. But the modern re-irony is of second- or third-tier sovereign states trading on that accusation against America while themselves acting in complicitous ways with criminal organizations, or even directly as brigands. Add to this the explosion in the number of non-governmental and international organizations. Many, often those with the gentlest names, are guilty of the same complicity with or enablement of criminal organizations and regimes. St. Augustine's observation is flipped on its head and back again. Formalized sovereignties, NGOs or international organizations, or any conspiratorial combination can be brigand. It is behavior, not organizational genera, that matters in calculating the moral necessity of America's strategies. Analysis of threats must not be distracted by the arguments of clever pirates, whether they wear an eye patch, a revolutionary armband or a presidential sash.

The fact is, multiples and hybrids of these modus operandi are employed by all categories of perpetrator. While we might not label all of them brigands, most engage in the brigandage.

3. Conventional Military Force

States are still the most powerful political entities that can organize resources for violence. Most states enjoy unity of command and purpose, can implement policies across borders, keep secrets, fund the ineffable, marshal manpower, expropriate land for military construction, provide sanctuary to others' outlaws, and ally with friend or foe for unworthy purposes. As in the case of North Korea, the factor of conventional force is wrapped into conditions of geographic control and influence. North Korean infantry divisions threaten the South Korean capital. That North Korea might strike at Japanese sovereign territory with nuclear weapons is plausible, but that threat is what underwrites the intimidation that North Korea's conventional divisions generate against South Korea, giving North Korea additional military leverage. Conversely, it is North Korea's conventional military power that protects its ability to pose a nuclear threat.

If the Venezuelan national military were to split or otherwise devolve into a force disciplined to protect an exclusive Chavez government, it would also harbor and encourage the FARC, which would in turn continue to attack the free development of regional energy resources, kidnap

¹⁷ See Geoffrey B. Demarest, Feasibility of Creating a Real Property Database for Colombia, Foreign Military Studies Office, available online at <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/colombia-feasibility.pdf>

travelers, traffic in illicit drugs, and associate with other international terrorist organizations. The US military could be obliged to prepare to fight the national army of Venezuela, a contingency that the US, its military, and its allies in the region do not and cannot want.

Venezuela's formal military power may not seem to present a grave challenge to US forces, but there are some who feel the United States still has not prepared itself to fight in the full variety of terrains and geographies.¹⁸ The US military is notoriously reluctant to fight in urban or mountainous areas, and while operations in Iraqi cities did not present the degree of ambush that the Russians faced in Grozny, the defense of a Latin American city by convinced nationalists might be entirely worse. Much of northern South America is either heavily populated, mountainous or both. Add to this the fact that the United States would find it politically, diplomatically and even culturally costly to aim units at anything in South America, and it is apparent that even a modest conventional enemy force could pose a formidable challenge if well employed.

Venezuela is wealthier than Yugoslavia, North Korea or Iraq. Of the two, Iraq and Venezuela, Venezuela supplies more oil to the US. Venezuela has about the same size population, but more than twice the territory, twice the GDP, half the foreign debt, and has closer cultural ties to the US. On the other hand, if, in light of the high cost of a US military intervention in the region, a Venezuelan military obedient to Hugo Chavez were left unopposed, the resulting political environment could become untenable. The governments of Venezuela and Cuba, for instance, could outsource violent parts of their foreign affairs portfolio to the FARC.¹⁹ The relationship of Venezuela to the FARC would be closer than the relationship of Iraq or Saudi Arabia to Al Qaeda.

Machiavelli's comments still resonate:

I say that, in my judgment, those are able to maintain themselves who, from an abundance of men and money, can put a well-appointed army into the field, and meet anyone in open battle that may attempt to attack them. And I esteem those as having need of the constant support of others who cannot meet their enemies in the field, but are under the necessity of taking refuge behind walls and keeping within them.²⁰

¹⁸ On this point, see for instance, John A. Gentry, "Doomed to Fail: America's Blind Faith in Military Technology," Parameters, Winter 2002-03, pp. 88-103.

¹⁹ The US constitution, reflecting the era of its authorship, specifies as a prerogative of the federal government the issuance of letters of marque and reprisal. Vestiges of the golden age of piracy, marque and reprisal were in common usage as a defensive tool against piracy. They may come into vogue again. Article I, Section 8, Clauses 10 and 11 of the U.S. Constitution grant Congress the power to define offenses against the law of nations and to authorize the use of non-governmental persons or entities to capture those who commit those offenses. The September 11 Marque and Reprisal Act of 2001 (H.R. 3076), and The Air Piracy Reprisal and Capture Act of 2001 (H.R. 3074) were introduced on October 10, 2001.

²⁰ Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter X, translated by W. K. Marriott, online at http://www.the-prince-by-machiavelli.com/the-prince/the_prince_chapter_10.html

In other words, the United States still needs big units with tanks and bombers and aircraft carriers that can go out and defeat uniformed, well-led and well-equipped military enemies.²¹ It must be able to root terrorist organizations out of their sanctuaries. The United States cannot abandon all of its heavy force structure or mobile, combined arms method of warfare since it will still be called on to close with and destroy large, modern military formations.

Since Demarest wrote this, Iran has grown closer to nuclear status while Venezuela's government has managed to greatly impoverish that country. It seems that globally many countries have been building up conventional forces. Still, although Demarest's assertion in the last paragraph holds true, it now seems unlikely that the United States will need to employ large maneuver formations. The trend toward greater special operations capacity-building around the globe, however, warns that the United States may need to increase its unconventional and counter-unconventional warfare strength, even at the expense of some conventional structures.

2. Math Assault

If America were to lose, even briefly, its edge in higher math to a country or other entity intent on doing America harm, US computer security codes, ability to conduct espionage, move money, communicate, distribute electrical power, command military forces, invent – all would be put at risk. The key to American wealth has become a metaphysical quantity, a state of math superiority that protects access to codes, accounts, and operating mechanisms of all kinds. Correspondingly, America's need to identify and court the best minds in the world becomes a basis of national survival. The brain drain of which other countries complain has become an addiction for the United States.

Some security writers have stylized this threat -- present, immediate, and constant -- as "information war." Into the bin called *information war* are often thrown teenage hacking, theft of music copyrights, spamming, and other digital law breaking. These itches of the information age are symptoms of what could become a deadly disease. The techniques, mental competencies, and formal education needed to commit digital misdemeanors are the same as for digital felonies and digital warfare, and so their perpetrators are aggressively pursued. Crimes of higher math are within the contemplation of small teams of researchers even in the most modest places around the globe.²²

²¹ The United States has one of about a dozen militaries in the world that maintain over 400 thousand men and women in uniform. China's military is by far the largest. Add Current Military Balance.

²² See, for instance, Paul Kaihla, "The Technology Secrets of Cocaine Inc.," *Business 2.0*, July 2002 online at <http://www.business2.com/articles/mag/0.1640.41206.00.html> A decade ago Colombian drug cartel purchased a 1.5 million dollar mainframe and connected it to a small network manned by a squad of highly qualified IT experts. According to Kaihla, "The mainframe was loaded with custom-written data-mining software. It cross-referenced the Cali phone exchange's traffic with the phone numbers of American personnel and Colombian intelligence and law enforcement officials. The computer was essentially conducting a perpetual internal mole-hunt of the cartel's organizational chart."; Some are claiming that the Internet itself is at risk. In this regard see, "Risk of internet collapse rising," BBC News World Edition, November 26, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/2514651.stm>

A black market has emerged for scientific and engineering software powerful enough to fall under United States export restrictions. Such software can be used in a wide range of tasks like designing rockets or nuclear reactors or predicting the path of a cloud of anthrax spores.²³

Any combination of unfriendly entities -- lone terrorist, brigand, felon, government, or simple pleasure seeker -- can fund, bully, or lead a team of scientists to empower other threats by assaulting US files, systems, accounts, and codes. Loss of math superiority means vulnerability to the entire list of threats and all its ugly pieces in their permutations and combinations. It would lay the American nation bare to every terrible manifestation of resentment, disdain, envy, recklessness and other human unworthiness harbored against it. A large-scale math invasion could irreparably change America's fortunes.

The threat of losing math superiority calls for a radical response. The United States should ensure that as many as possible of the best math minds in the world have the opportunity, and the reasonable desire to choose the west, to choose America as home. This means the United States government should take active measures to identify the best science and math minds in the world, at an early age, and assure that math education in the United States does not continue to lag.²⁴ Obviously, finding a way to reverse the trend of anti-Americanism is important. Meanwhile, individuals embarked in math and science on paths detrimental to the safety of the United States must be stopped.

The threat of math attack exposes a central paradox of American defense. Many of America's best scientists are immigrants who entered the United States to enjoy the advantages of a free society and thriving economy. Others of America's best math minds are the offspring of recently immigrated families charged perhaps by a formidable combination of intelligence, work ethic and fear of failure.²⁵ These persons are an essential resource for national survival.²⁶ Their presence and cultivation depends on the relative attraction of American society in terms of liberty and economic opportunity, and on immigration policies. If as part of the American response to the real and perceived threat of terrorism, Americans opt for reducing liberties, invading privacy, encumbering economic opportunity, they may in the process diminish the relative attractiveness of the society to which beautiful minds aspire. Likewise, if US immigration policies are exclusive as to technical and scientific expertise, or American scientists

²³ JOHN SCHWARTZ, "Black Market for Software Is Sidestepping Export Controls," <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/02/technology/02PIRA.html?todaysh headlines>

²⁴ William J. Bennett, "Twenty troubling facts about American education," *Empower America*, 06/21/99 online at [http://www.empoweramerica.org/stories/storyReader\\$236](http://www.empoweramerica.org/stories/storyReader$236) "American 12th graders rank 19th out of 21 industrialized countries in mathematics achievement and 16th out of 21 nations in science. Our advanced physics students rank dead last."

²⁵ An excellent resource for those interested in the complex debate over relative academic performance in the sciences is the National Science Foundation Division of Science Resource Statistics online at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/nsf96311/wmch1.htm#minor>

²⁶ Depending on the breadth of our own definitions regarding what we consider anti-social behavior in the sciences, the United States and its allies may also face an entirely new level of challenge that escapes the conceptual boundaries of homeland security. Laboratories that (to put it most euphemistically) exceed ethical recommendations in genetic engineering, for instance, might find themselves to be military targets of an American moral pique. No longer defense of the territory, but defense of the genome may become a 21st century crusade.

are restricted in their freedom to communicate with counterparts around the world.²⁷ American security, to this extent, to the extent of identifying and attracting math competence, resides in its vulnerability. How dependency on cerebral resources reconciles itself with the need to control offensive migration has already become a serious American dilemma. The term cyber had not yet come into ubiquitous use in our strategy conversation.

Please note footnote 26, in which Demarest mentions genetic tinkering, something now quickly rising in status toward becoming an existential threat. Today that footnote comment might have to be elevated to the main text. The rest, about cyber war generally, is still valid.

1. Irony

A number of ironies were noted in the discussion of the previous nine threats, but the number one threat to America is irony itself -- in the form of violent ambush. America's most dangerous enemies will try to surprise it, and the first defense is to discard the notion that surprise is something impossible to avoid. On the relationship between irony and security strategy, no thinker is more relevant than the late British physicist, R. V. Jones (Reginald Victor Jones). Jones was instrumental in allied deception planning during WWII, and was asked personally by Winston Churchill to invent a way to defeat German radar. The result was chaff, something now considered commonplace, but at the time, genius. In a series of brief, obscure lectures from 1957 to 1975, Jones expressed the nature of his strategic thinking. The titles of two of those lectures bespeak the odd nature of his message: "The theory of practical joking--its relevance to physics" and "Irony as a phenomenon in natural science and human affairs."²⁸ As a prankster Jones considered it therapeutic to trick his physicist colleagues into incongruous and unproductive acts such as plunging their perfectly good telephones into buckets of water. Jones found in jokes all the patterns by which the mind is surprised, delightfully, or as in warfare, tragically. His sense of humor and of strategy incorporated the idea of creating and anticipating the unexpected. Likewise, his advice regarding defense policy underscored respect for a complementary strategic irony, that of the unintended consequences of defensive measures. One of his lecture examples was that of the great pyramids. The Faeroes, to preserve their honor as well as their remains, built huge edifices in which to protect their corpses. The effect was to

²⁷ The US government has issued directives that federal agencies develop student immigration policies to resist terrorism and prohibit certain students from receiving education and training in sensitive areas. See "Administration Proposes New Panel to Evaluate 'Sensitive Areas' for International Students," University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, May 7, 2002 online at http://www.ucar.edu/oga/news_updates/washington_updates/foreign_students_sensitive_research.htm; See also Colin Macilwain, "US societies fear clamp-down on visits by foreign scientists," *Nature* Vol. 398 (1999), pp. 447 - 448 online at http://www.nature.com/cgi-taf/DynaPage.taf?file=/nature/journal/v398/n6727/full/398447a0_r.html "Scientific societies in the United States are increasingly concerned that the US government has reversed its previous support of free communication between scientists."

²⁸ R. V. Jones, "The theory of practical joking--its relevance to physics," *Bulletin of the Institute of Physics* 1957, p. 193; "Irony as a phenomenon in natural science and human affairs" (Presented at the University of Manchester on 29 February 1968), *Chemistry and Industry* 13 April 1968, pp. 470-477; "The Theory of Practical Joking - An Elaboration," *Journal of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications*, January/February 1975, pp. 10-17.; Jones, R. V. *The Wizard War: British Scientific Intelligence, 1939-1945*. New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1978.

identify the location of their remains and to create a visible promise of great reward to the thief. Ultimately, Egyptian planners had to resort to hiding deceased royalty in the desert.²⁹

Occasionally, new methods of attack are called *asymmetric* in reference to the fact that America's enemies naturally resort to methods that avoid or obviate America's capital and technological advantages. This recognition of asymmetry is not particularly useful, however, once it is realized that underdogs have always everywhere depended on cunning and economy to overcome material disadvantage. Strategic ambush, mortal surprise -- is what the Western world fears, and why terrorism, with its violent incongruous paroxysms, is a catchword. Admitting that the most dangerous asymmetry is the moral abandon that allows America's enemies to act in ways that America cannot, it is again the irony within that fact that penetrates. The West's civilizing standards, its cultural progress in law and behavioral norms are what today provide an asymmetric edge to its enemies, but only in the short term of violent enterprises. In the longer term, it is the fact of civilizing standards and discipline that separates and justifies a culture. It would be a shame if, in response to moral asymmetry (uncivilized irony) the West and especially the United States were to fall prey to the complementary irony of unintended consequences. That is, if America's reaction makes it still more vulnerable to the threats it had hoped to avoid.

This was good stuff. Europeans are quickly falling prey by adjusting their culture in submission to the moral impositions of brigand culture. Sadly, it seems that the anti-Americanism at the top of the list is something we have been doing to ourselves so much that we are psychologically ill-prepared for the rest.

Response and the Defense Community

After the 1991 Gulf War, and the coincidental end of the Cold War, the US defense establishment made sounds leading some to doubt that it recognized the panorama of new threats or that it was reorganizing to address it. Admiration of the "Military Technical Revolution" (which soon became interchangeable with "revolution in military affairs") provided observations about the relationship of new technologies to the future of U.S. security challenges, but treatment of irregular warfare seemed to betray institutional preference for large military technical systems. Authors defined technical revolution as a fundamental advance in technology, doctrine, or organization rendering existing methods of conducting warfare obsolete, but were somewhat oblivious to forms of warfare that the US had never mastered, and that had not become obsolete. They seemed to be trying to take the technical revolution in the direction of threats that were understood, and away from those that were more likely.³⁰ Leading security theorists described a revolution in information, sensing, and precision strike technologies, but not everyone was

²⁹ R. V. Jones, "The theory of practical joking--its relevance to physics," *Bulletin of the Institute of Physics* 1957, p. 193; "Irony as a phenomenon in natural science and human affairs" (Presented at the University of Manchester on 29 February 1968), *Chemistry and Industry* 13 April 1968, pp. 470-477; "The Theory of Practical Joking - An Elaboration," *Journal of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications*, January/February 1975, pp. 10-17.; Jones, R.V. *The Wizard War: British Scientific Intelligence, 1939-1945*. New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1978.

³⁰ For instance, in April, 1994, the US Army War College held a conference titled *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Defining an Army for the 21st Century*.

impressed. In a potent critique, A.C. Bacevich jabbed that "however handsomely packaged, institutional advocacy of change almost invariably conceals a defense of orthodoxy." Bacevich stated:

In truth, as currently touted by soldiers, the very concept of a Military Revolution is profoundly reactionary. Its true aim is to roll back the two genuine revolutions that have shaped war in the modern age, revolutions for which military professionals never devised an adequate response. The first of those revolutions was the advent of total war, culminating in the creation of nuclear weapons. The second--in large measure stimulated by the first--was the proliferation of conflict at the opposite end of the spectrum: terror, subversion, insurgency, and "peoples war."³¹

Critics of the establishment revolution could also scoff at the military's once again wanting to re-fight the last war. The technologies of the insiders' revolution were those that would have been applied with even greater effect had they been available in the 1991 Gulf War, and eventually, in the 2003 Iraq War, they were. The conventional revolution also serviced another goal, support of a professionally technified, and ergo smaller, military. The second Iraq war seems to have justified much of the conventional revolution's precepts. Nevertheless, if America's strategic habit did not serve with distinction in the two forms of twentieth-century war that Bacevich mentions, why expect this conventionalism to meet the challenge presented by unconventional forms of twenty-first-century struggle? More physical precision, more capital, and more information paid off in taking out the Iraqi military, as did, to be fair, more psychological preparation of the battlefield. However (even though it threatened to do so) the Iraqi regime (at first) barely presented the kind of challenge of which Bacevich warned.

So is the United States' government making changes that respond to subversion, organized criminality, weapons of mass murder, or amoral use of innocents? It appears that it is, even if some of the changes are a hodge-podge of movements related only to the extent that they meet a common set of challenges. The Office of Homeland Security is part of the answer, especially to the extent it gives institutional voice to a whole list of enemy activities that the military is not culturally equipped or inclined to handle. The Department of Defense is spending money on research and acquisition of limited-lethality weapons because so many of the targets at which American military weapons might be pointed escape classification as legal enemies. The regime of laws and regulations that guide US military practices is constantly expanding. It also appears that many in the defense community recognize the special danger of organizations such as the FARC. Organized brigandage, because its pecuniary motivation allows compromise on issues of ideology, is a model for evildoing worse than that of Al Qaeda. The Colombian FARC is only the most dangerous of these, situated as it is within the geography of an allied state, close to the US and in proximity to a sponsoring state with a stridently anti-American government. Of all the guidance that the list of threats might provide as to where the United States might address its defensive attention, Northern South America is the most urgent. The changes in the American

³¹ National Interest when?

way of war made after the Gulf War proved themselves in the Iraq War of 2003. Direct military action in Northern South America would require far greater adjustments.

Ultimately, America's defenders must understand and dominate strategic irony in both its aspects -- violent ambush and the unintended consequences of defending against that ambush. Changes in military, investigative, and prosecutorial agencies are a worthy response to the new shape of dangers arrayed against America, but they are not enough to anticipate and respond to adversarial human creativity. They do not answer sufficiently the problem of malevolent surprise. First and foremost, the US cannot continue to over-depend on intelligence received through a technological screen. Like the German radar defeated by R.V. Jones' chaff, technical systems, while important, do not adjust quickly enough to the human game. Over-dependence on them could mean the United States will fail to get some ugly joke, suffer more deadly surprises for failure to preempt and neutralize some violent actor. The United States must continue to increase its human intelligence capacity, improve the nation's ability in foreign languages, and combine open-source with classified intelligence. The legion of human intelligence assets must, even before finding missiles, chemicals, and biological agents, keep its eyes and ears tuned to the world of math. The United States also must organize to confront large-scale brigandage, that is to say, to win at what is called insurgent, guerrilla or low-intensity warfare. To do this, new organizational forms should be considered, perhaps completely separate from the current military.

The rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property -- the non-negotiable demands of human dignity -- are not concepts that will be easily acknowledged and digested everywhere. At times insistence on meeting these demands may harden and even create the kinds of behavior reflected in the list of threats. In the long run, however, resolve in meeting the demands will build a world that is less physically dangerous than it is today. Faith in that assertion is required. Like it or not, America at the beginning of the twenty-first century is striving to contribute optimistically to the structure of life.³² This, it appears, will often mean projecting physical power.

This is a pretty good dance-off. It does not appear the in the last decade or so we as a nation have been meeting the spirit suggested in this last paragraph with sufficient resolve. – Holmes Oliver

³² The reference to the structure of life is to a 1943 speech of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in which he defended his concept of "Four Freedoms" saying, "We concede that these great teachings are not perfectly lived up to today, but I would rather be a builder than a wrecker, hoping always that the structure of life is growing- not dying." Found in [Philip Zelikow](#), "The Transformation of National Security," [The National Interest](#), Spring, 2003, online at