

Globalization Gets a Bodyguard

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Definitions of U.S. national security never will be the same after 11 September 2001. Americans now have a costly bodyguard in the form of a Homeland Security Council which could impact globalization on many fronts.

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To the vast majority of the world, the United States represents the leading edge of globalization—a harbinger of a future where efficient markets, political pluralism, and individual choice reign supreme. Moreover, as the new rules of this new era emerge and governments step in to regulate the markets, the United States (especially its Treasury Department) plays chief rule-maker. In the meantime, the U.S. military has remained strong, saving most countries the trouble of having to finance big or expeditionary militaries, leading the coalitions that tidy up those conflicts on the edges of globalization, and containing the trouble-makers who threaten to disrupt it.

Think about what an unprecedented combination that is: the world's most open society, most vibrant economy, and strongest military power. And the United States had maintained a careful, stable balance among those elements.

Then consider how much has changed as a result of 11 September:

- The rear admiral and pilots of the Enterprise (CVN-65) Battle Group operating in the Arabian Sea ask reporters not to use their names for fear that such publicity might endanger their families.
- The Coast Guard conducts its largest port defense operations since World War II.
- National Guard personnel stand watch in every major domestic airport.

- Debates rage in the Pentagon and in Congress about creating a “combat command”—“CinCAmerica”—to fight terrorism within our borders, in support of the domestic agencies.
- Military intelligence agencies poll Hollywood screenwriters for their best ideas on where and how terrorists will strike next.

But most telling of all, American citizens just got a permanent bodyguard in the form of a Homeland Security Council. Not a military escort but a civilian bodyguard, the centrality of this new political entity will indicate how the United States may balance homeland introspection with world interactions in the coming years.

On the one hand, Osama bin Laden has challenged the United States to retreat from the world (or at least from his world, which stretches from Sierra Leone to the Sulu Archipelago). On the other hand, we have found a world community beyond unilateralism.

Osama's Real Victory

Until 11 September, there was a clear consensus in this country that “national security” meant the Defense Department’s four military branches operating in forward deployments around the world, or being ready to do so. “Defense” was an “over there” concept, something we paid military professionals to perform overseas. The forces were deployed or “expeditionary,” not homeland defense forces. Even missile defense was no longer to be simply “national,” but worldwide.

Following the September terrorist attacks, we now have a dual definition of national security, largely because our confidence concerning the ability of our deployed and expeditionary forces to defend the United States forward has been shattered.

DoD covered both the forward and homeland defense portfolios during the Cold War by assuring our domestic strategic security vis-à-vis Soviet missiles while containing Soviet bloc expansion around the world with our forward-deployed forces. But that world is gone. Our forward-deployed military was proven essentially irrelevant when it came to defending our strategic security on 11 September. Yes, DoD will hunt down bin Laden in Afghanistan, and other agencies and countries ultimately will roll up bin Laden’s terrorist network overseas. But as far as this country’s domestic strategic security is concerned, the Pentagon has just been demoted to subcontractor to the Homeland Security authority.

That stunning turn of events represents Osama bin Laden’s real victory over the United States and its regular military establishment—one that no amount of well-aimed cruise missiles can erase.

Downstream Effects from 9/11

As anyone in the private security business will tell you, bodyguards cost plenty. As a cost of doing the nation’s business, this charge will be too large for state and local governments to absorb, signaling an expansion of federal power and spending not seen since Franklin Roosevelt declared, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Homeland security will grow—as a concept, strategy, bureaucracy, and budget—in direct proportion to our society’s ballooning fear concerning terrorism. George W. Bush cannot win this “new war”—or a second term—merely by producing bin Laden’s head. He can only prevail in this strategic struggle by restoring Americans’ sense of personal security.

Up to now, Americans have largely looked after themselves for personal security, augmenting our reasonably robust local police structure by shelling out their own dollars for personal weapons, home-security systems, gated communities, and the like. But again, bin Laden’s stunning strike has merged definitions of strategic and personal security, and that conflation will long be felt in the Congress’s willingness to redirect federal discretionary spending toward restoring our collective personal security and away from all this international engagement we had become accustomed to during the Cold War and in the decade after it.

When President Bush announced the homeland security entity, it was first described as just an “office,” but soon we learned it would grow into a “council” on a par with the National Security Council. How much more authority might it gain, and what budgetary resources will it command?

Clearly this will be an event-driven process largely beyond DoD’s control. Another 5,000 dead, say, in Chicago or Los Angeles, and we shortly will have a Homeland Security Agency or even a Department that absorbs command of elements of DoD—an interior ministry like many other countries have.

After 11 September, this pathway is conceivable, and in many ways, it may be inevitable given the opportunities for terrorists to infiltrate the United States in this globalization era. At the very least, it is a greater long-term likelihood than Governor Tom Ridge ending up as just another “drug czar.” That is because our continued consumption of narcotics threatens no one in the world except ourselves, whereas the terrorists want to kill Americans to drive us out of the huge Islamic world they dream of someday running like the Taliban’s Afghanistan.

In short, our collective determination to not let “them”—the terrorists—change our way of life is met with their equal determination to not let “us”—American-led globalization—destroy their way of life. That is why this war may well rival or exceed the length of our Cold War standoff with the Soviets. Terrorism has been around for a long time and has excelled at dispatching monarchs, but the world neither has seen anything on the scale of 11 September, nor have the opportunities to slip in and out of countries been so easy since the 18th century.

Assuming that this conflict will drag on year after year, it is inevitable that the federal homeland security effort will demand a larger share of the federal discretionary budget. At first, this trend will plunge the U.S. Government back into the universe of deficit spending. DoD will benefit substantially from the generalized boost in “security” spending in 9/11’s immediate aftermath, but that plus-up likely will be short-lived, meaning a couple of years.

Now, and continuing to the 2004 presidential election, we likely are to face an economy experiencing nowhere near the record growth rates of the booming 1990s. Say goodbye to the record revenue flows and say hello to the additional costs—both real and opportunity—associated with all this expanded internal security and the consequent restrictions on international traffic entering the United States. Meanwhile the nation will be growing older,

as the leading edge of the boomer generation hits the 60-year mark, leading to a further squeeze on the discretionary budget in favor of mandatory social security programs.

After the campaign in Afghanistan is over, whenever that happens, DoD's budget inevitably will be squeezed. In a three-way race among taking care of elders (who vote), taking care of our personal and domestic security, and resuming the task of maintaining regional stability somewhere "over there," guess which funding stream gets squeezed the tightest?

The Vision Thing

Many in the national security community who declare that we just experienced another Pearl Harbor likewise assume that the American public inevitably will remain wedded to the notion that this country must stay forward engaged militarily—no matter what the relative cost. That is a huge assumption worth examining.

First, we tend to idealize the "greatest generation's" selfless willingness to endure the privations and sacrifices of World War II—especially on the home front.

- It was fairly easy to demonize our enemies in that declared war, for those national regimes were truly demonic. We have a much finer line to tread in this virtual "war" against nonstate actors, for no other reason than to avoid the appearance of a generalized "clash of civilizations" with Islam itself, something bin Laden obviously seeks to promote.
- Americans knew it was an us-or-them fight; either our country would prevail or we would have found ourselves largely isolated in a fascist-dominated world. Radical Islam offers no realistic world view. It basically just wants the West—and especially U.S. forces—out of the Middle East.
- World War II lasted a mere four years as far as the United States was concerned. This "war" is likely to drag on far longer. As both the United Kingdom and Israel have shown in recent decades, it is possible to live with ongoing terrorist challenges, but the societal tensions are dramatic and costly. None of this increased domestic security is going to be cheaply achieved and maintained.

Second, since the end of the Cold War, the American public and their representatives in Congress have been clear that they are uncomfortable with the role of global policeman. Some claimed that it was a more dangerous world after the Cold War, and that we had to police it since no one else was going to. They did not have in mind fighting a war like the Soviets did in Afghanistan. It was more like containing the rogues, making a few interventions in internal conflicts once truces had been arranged, and the occasional show of force off Taiwan.

Now, if forward presence and interventions become identified with retaliation by terrorists that results in periodic civilian casualties numbering in the thousands, we should expect strong domestic opposition to emerge and force a debate about the role of the U.S. military in regulating the international security environment. Yes, our collective sense of revenge/justice will propel us sufficiently along to eliminate bin Laden and roll up his al Qaeda network, but there is no guarantee that Americans will remain united beyond that discrete goal.

Third, we just endured a direct attack against our homeland in which roughly as many people died as in the bloodiest day of our nation's history—the Civil War's Battle of Antietam. The Bush administration did not panic, but slowly and patiently formed an international coalition and planned carefully prior to beginning military strikes. But think about what that says about what a complex world in which we live.

Bin Laden just killed 5,000 of ours and other countries' citizens, but our retaliation and our capturing of bin Laden and tracking down his cells in 60 countries mean we have to go out there and do it. We can not do all that from the sea and Whiteman Air Force Base. Bin Laden may have struck us, but a lot of the advanced countries, and Russia and China too, could be struck next. All the countries benefiting from globalization are in this together. This is a complex international security environment where unilateralism simply does not work.

Fourth, there will be no unlimited pie for "national security," especially as the mounting deficit is recognized, so any rise in resource requirements for Homeland Security will inevitably eat into the Pentagon's budget. Less money means either fewer operations, less purchases, or smaller force structure, or diversion of force structure (military personnel) to homeland defense. In any case, U.S. military capabilities would be spread more thinly, assuming Americans still think we should be policing the world.

We will need to take some different perspectives on what we thought were going to be threats to our interests. Some interests may not seem so vital anymore, some relationships not worth pursuing to the same degree. But this is not because of the thinness of the forces—they will still be the strongest, most capable forces in the world. It is because of the new perspective of what is most important to the American people.

Finally, there are the dilemmas posed to the Navy itself. The Navy may be tempted in the coming months and years to prove how useful it is in homeland security, just as it was in jumping on the national missile defense bandwagon. Homeland defense in U.S. coastal waters is the job of the U.S. Coast Guard, and it may well benefit from some of the resources diverted from DoD. The U.S. Navy probably does not want to lower its technological sights, but then these roles are not its choice, but the nation's.

The United States has kept a global navy of great capability, and this has permitted most other countries in the world to concentrate on their "coast guard" navies. If the United States starts operating its navy like a coast guard, we abdicate our role as the world's navy, and maybe then bin Laden will have succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. Saddam and the Iranians would be happy too.

But we do not need to do that. Under any conditions, the United States has much more navy than needed for homeland defense. The U.S. Navy has a critical role in the Persian Gulf and in adjacent waters. It also has a highly symbolic role in maintaining East Asian stability. And we have this broader coalition that we have rediscovered, of which navy-to-navy cooperation plays an important part. There is no reason for the United States to retreat from the world now.

Whither Transformation?

Before 11 September, the strategic debate in defense was between policing the world in the

here-and-now and transformation to face an unknown peer competitor, or simply to take advantage of changing technology. But now, it appears that U.S. forces as they exist—with the addition of C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) improvements and more precision-guided munitions—are more than adequate for the war against terrorism. More important may be their new roles in homeland versus international defense:

- The U.S. Army, especially the National Guard and Army Reserve, is taking a big role in homeland defense, and may get to administer the resources for a national missile defense.
- The Air Force, which had organized well for expeditionary responses (AEFs), takes on more a dual role in continental air defense as well as expeditionary operations.
- The Marine Corps proposes a super brigade for domestic and overseas antiterrorism operations.
- With the Coast Guard watching the coasts, the Navy still patrols the Persian Gulf and Asia.

This is not the kind of radical technological transformation most had in mind before 11 September.

The Newer World Order

It is fair to say that when the Bush administration came into power it really did not have a foreign policy, just a firm notion that Clinton's approach to globalization was far too focused on the broad architecture of free trade. The anti-Clinton foreign policy basically was a my-way-or-the-highway unilateralism.

In the new administration's world view, Russia and China were back to being more front-and-center concerns, and India could be a new friend if it signed off on our missile defense. Japan and our European allies were expected to fall in line, even though we were not going to give an inch on things like Kyoto or the World Court. Iran and Iraq were told there was a new sheriff in town, unafraid to crack the whip of tighter sanctions.

That was then, this is now:

- The other NATO members are ready to defend us!
- Japan is gearing up to make real military contributions.
- Moscow is advising us on how to take down Afghanistan.
- China is openly approving a U.S. military intervention in Asia.
- India is asking us for help with Kashmiri terrorists.

Do not think for a minute that all this support will not come with price tags, but clearly we are experiencing an historic moment not seen since Iraq invaded Kuwait. So the question for the Bush administration is this: What world architecture are you going to build to consolidate this

groundswell of cooperation?

In effect, we will now see how Bush the Younger's edition of a New World Order might surpass the aborted version of Bush the Elder. There is good reason to believe that this time that wildly ambitious slogan will stick—both in name and substance. All of the world's great powers understand that a strong antiglobalization backlash is brewing, threatening the long-term growth and prosperity of all. Before 9/11, Seattle Man was this movement's scariest face, but he looks laughably impotent compared to the still-rippling global economic shock wave bin Laden unleashed with his World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks.

By making it clear that the major powers are not going to stand by idly while terrorists try to sow systemic disruptions, the East and West may come together to discover a sense of global community that proves to be globalization's version of "soft power."

The Navy is a versatile tool for assisting in the sort of security networking among great powers that globalization needs now. So while its key task right now is suppressing the Taliban so others can track down bin Laden, the Navy's longer-term vision must be twofold:

- Contributing where it can to homeland defense, depending on national decisions on missile defense and the patrolling of coastal waters
- Containing and suppressing those who would disrupt peace and economic progress—the essence of globalization—forward, especially in the Middle East arc of crisis.

It appears that U.S. naval technological capabilities, as they may be incrementally improved, will be adequate for these tasks. The greater challenges may be to take good care of naval personnel, who may be tasked for long stays in distant waters, maintaining adequate readiness, and keeping numbers of ships instead of striving for the ultimate in technologies.