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**Politics in the Next 50 Years: The Changing Nature
of International Conflict**

Paul Rogers

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES

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Editorial

Welcome to the re-launch of the **Peace Studies Working Paper Series** after a two-year absence. In this first issue of the new series, Paul Rogers' ground-breaking *Politics in the Next 50 Years: The Changing Nature of International Conflict* captures the dynamics and complexity of the changing nature of international politics and security within the context of a new global political economy.

The re-launch of the **Peace Studies Working Paper Series** is against the background of monumental changes that have and are still taking place internationally, nationally and locally. We have seen the dawn of the new millennium and the Y2K threat that never materialised. The UN, after its peacekeeping humiliation in Sierra Leone, can still organise another jamboree for world leaders, in an attempt to revamp the world body. Though the threat from massive destruction as a result of nuclear war is diminishing, the threat of massive disruption from civil wars and intra-communal violence becomes an increasing danger to world peace and security, as manifested in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East. We have seen how the people's revolution in Yugoslavia threw out the 'butcher of the Balkans', but we wait to see what becomes of the post-Milosevic era. Africa has, yet again, become the fashionable topic for Western governments and NGOs, but with very little input of African realism into the international policy process. The massive destruction and loss of life as a result of flooding and freak weather conditions is a telling reminder of what we have done to the environment and the planetary legacy we are leaving for our children and grandchildren. But on a happy note, the Sydney 2000 Olympics provided the finest Olympic sporting hour for countries like Britain: yet Cameroon ensured that Africa again dominated the Olympics football event. So will Africa surprise the football world?

Nationally, we have seen how direct action, manifested by the fuel protests in the UK and across Europe, has taken the 'shine' off New Labour. Is this the shape of the new political order in Britain? The British military intervention in its former colony, Sierra Leone, brings home the stark realisation that there is no 'missionary position' in an ethical foreign policy. But we also mourn the death of the Scottish First Minister, Donald Dewar.

Locally, the Department of Peace Studies has moved to a more comfortable and accommodating building, the Pemberton Building. It is hoped that this relocation will provide an opportunity for the Department to realise its full potential.

The next issue of the **Peace Studies Working Paper Series** will be a collection of papers on contemporary issues, marking a change to the previous format. If you are unhappy with any of the changes or have suggestions for improvements, please contact me by e-mail at d.j.francis@bradford.ac.uk, or by telephone on 01274 235298. Staff and students are encouraged to contribute to the Working Paper Series. Anyone wishing to do so, please send your paper to Carol Hutson: c.r.hutson@bradford.ac.uk. Thanks and appreciation go to Carol for the considerable time and expertise put into the re-launch and production of this **Peace Studies Working Paper Series**.

David Francis
October 2000

Paul F. Rogers, October 2000

Introduction

This paper seeks to examine the underlying factors that will influence international security in the coming decades. In contrast to the Cold War era, it will be argued that two fundamental issues will largely determine the evolution of conflict - the widening socio-economic polarisation and problems of environmental constraints. Taken together with the proliferation of military technologies, the paper argues that attempts to maintain the present world order in the interests of a minority elite are unlikely to succeed and will, instead, enhance the risks of conflict. A radical re-thinking of western perceptions of security is necessary that will embrace a willingness to address the core causes of insecurity at their roots.

War in the Recent Past

In seeking to analyse possible trends in war in the early twenty-first century, it is worth looking at the experience since the end of the last world war in 1945. In this 55 year period, often considered a time of relative peace, there have been at least 120 wars fought in most regions of the world. Over 25 million people have been killed and 75 million seriously injured, not far short of the total casualties throughout the European and Asia/Pacific conflicts that made up the Second World War. Many individual wars in the past half century, including Korea, Biafra, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Mozambique and Vietnam, have led to more than a million people dying.¹

In the last year of the century, there was an intense and costly war in Kosovo and Serbia, civil war continued in Afghanistan and the Caucasus, as did an immensely costly insurgency in Algeria. While a violent peace existed in North Ireland and the Basque region of Spain, conflict continued between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and within Sri Lanka and Sudan. Somalia survived without any central government at all, and Sierra Leone and Liberia were almost ungovernable. Bitter internal conflict continued in Colombia and Peru, as did war in Congo and the Central African Republic, while a bitter and immensely destructive war in Angola continued unabated and war in Chechnya escalated in the final months of the year.

While some progress was made between Israel and the Palestinians, India and Pakistan continued their confrontation in Kashmir, now under a nuclear shadow, and Indonesia's determination to retain East Timor led eventually to multinational intervention. In many other

countries, conflict was close to the surface or uneasily controlled. Bangladesh, Bosnia, Cambodia, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq and Turkey were examples of many countries that remained close to war or insurgency, and the Zapatista revolt in Mexico cast a shadow over the politics of that whole country.

Over the past fifty years, the victims of war have been drawn more and more heavily from the civil community rather than the military, continuing a trend extending over most of the century. The First World War was primarily a killing field for soldiers, but the Second World War killed far more civilians, and many conflicts since 1945 have seen civil-military death ratios of 10:1. As has been said, “The young men do the fighting but it’s the rest who do the dying”.

There are exceptions to this trend, notably the Iran/Iraq War of the early 1980s which saw static warfare involving hundreds of thousands of young soldiers. The trend is also a phenomenon of the twentieth century - most of the wars of colonial conquest and control in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were wars with appalling civilian casualties, added to which the European slave trade did massive damage to society in much of Africa.

Many of the early post-1945 conflicts were wars of de-colonisation and liberation, with those in Indo-China and Algeria being especially devastating. Many others had strong Cold War overtones, some of them being proxy wars. Wars in Korea, Vietnam, North-East and Southern Africa and Central America had a direct relationship to East-West rivalries, and relatively few were primarily regional, although these include two of the longest-lasting confrontations, Israel and the Palestinians and India and Pakistan.

During the course of the 1990s, it appeared that a much greater number of conflicts were mainly internal, yet there were marked international dimensions to such conflicts, and the NATO/Serbia war and that between Eritrea and Ethiopia were both counters to that apparent trend. In the world as a whole, there were close to thirty active or suspended conflicts; at the end of the century, it could hardly be said that prospects for peace were encouraging.

Legacies of the Cold War

For 45 years after the end of the Second World War, much of the world was in the shadow of the Cold War, a confrontation that had three features that are relevant to any attempt to

discuss future trends in conflict. The first is that it was an immensely costly venture. At its peak, in the mid-1980s, world military expenditure reached \$1,000 billion per annum, of which some 83% was by NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the great majority of it directed towards the East-West confrontation. It was an extraordinary diversion of resources, contrasting dramatically with the far smaller resources that could have controlled polio or malaria, could have provided safe drinking water and literacy programmes throughout the world or could have transformed food production for the poorest peoples of the world.

During the 1974 World Food Crisis, the worst period of food insecurity in the past fifty years, it was estimated that expenditure of \$5 billion per year for ten years on tropical agricultural development would transform the prospects for adequate nutrition. Such an expenditure was around 2% of world spending on the military at that time.

The sustained confrontation of the Cold War also resulted in the development of many new military technologies. The most widely recognised of these were the weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, with world arsenals peaking at over 50,000 warheads by the end of the 1980s, many times more than could have destroyed all the world's major centres of population. Chemical and biological weapons also proliferated, as did ballistic and cruise missiles and a remarkable array of precision-guided missiles and bombs and area-impact munitions.

In some of the major confrontations of the 1990s, much was made of the accuracy of some precision-guided munitions, especially during the 1991 Gulf War. Conflicts could be represented as “wars against real estate”, in which deserted bridges and empty aircraft hangars could be destroyed at will, and on video, for prime time TV reporting. This characterisation of war as a clean and even bloodless activity, reached its height with the use of cruise missiles and other precision weapons against targets in Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and elsewhere, but it was dealt a severe blow by the deaths and injuries, so-called collateral damage, experienced especially in Iraq and Kosovo.

The development and proliferation of area-impact munitions (AIMs) is an aspect of the Cold War years that has received little attention but has considerable implications for future conflict. The Vietnam War was a proving ground for many AIMs, as the more primitive systems such

as napalm were replaced by more controllable weapons, especially cluster munitions and fuel-air explosives.

Modern AIMS are designed to have a near-total effect against “soft” targets, such as people, over a substantial area. A standard cluster bomb, the British BL755, as deployed in the Falklands War and elsewhere, distributes 147 grenade-sized sub-munitions, each of which explodes to yield around 2,000 high-velocity shrapnel fragments, rather like the controlled distribution of a large number of precision-manufactured nail bombs. The BL755 spreads its destructive force over about one and a half acres, but this is of restricted effect compared with some modern rocket-launched systems.

The US MLRS rocket-launcher, for example, can ripple fire 12 rockets over a 20 mile range, delivering several thousand anti-personnel sub-munitions over an area of about 45 acres. If a number of launchers are used, the destructive force against “soft” targets is similar to that of a small tactical nuclear weapon.

Rocket launchers and cluster bombs are now manufactured by a number of countries throughout the world and are readily available, and in service, in many armed forces. In terms of the destructive power of conventional conflicts, they have the potential to make future wars yet more devastating.

An indirect effect of the Cold War was the proliferation of light arms, often poured into the hands of proxy arms fighting for the East or West. The ending of the Cold War eased the intensity of some of the conflicts, but the weapons themselves remained available, often cascading down to paramilitaries and civilians, especially in Africa, Central Asia and parts of Latin America.

The final feature of the Cold War, made more obvious with the benefit of hindsight, was the extent of the dangers of the era.² A few crises were apparent at the time, notably the Cuba Missile Crisis of 1962, but other have been uncovered and those that were known have been shown to have involved far greater dangers. In 1962, for example, the United States was prepared to invade Cuba without knowing that Soviet forces already had tactical nuclear weapons available. During the same crisis, Strategic Air Command officers ignored every prohibition and prepared some ICBMs for possible independent launching. The 1973 Yom

Kippur/Ramadan War involved Israeli preparations for possible nuclear use and a US/Soviet crisis in which US nuclear weapons in Britain were put on heightened alert without initial reference to the British government.

The Quemoy/Matsu crisis in East Asia in 1954-55 came close to nuclear escalation, and one of the most extraordinary crises, in the autumn of 1983, remained entirely hidden from public knowledge for several years. At a time of leadership crisis in Moscow, and near-paranoia following President Reagan's "evil empire" comments, and just two months after the shooting down of the Korean Airlines airliner, NATO engaged in exercise Able Archer to test the deployment of its new accurate mobile nuclear missiles in Europe. The Soviets mistook this for preparations for war, and placed their own forces on high alert.³ Though the crisis did not spill over into war, it caused concern and confusion in NATO, and no further exercises of a similar kind were held for the rest of the Cold War.

Throughout the Cold War there were numerous accidents involving nuclear weapons. Some were lost and never recovered, others were severely damaged leading to substantial radioactive contamination. Much more is now known of these events, at least in the West, and there are suspicions of major long-term environmental and human affects from accidents in the former Soviet Union.

This largely hidden history of the Cold War is being substantially uncovered, and it is reasonable now to argue that those few researchers and larger numbers of anti-nuclear activists, who were side-lined or ridiculed as doom-watchers for warning of nuclear dangers, were far closer to the reality of the times. This may be with the benefit of hindsight, but hindsight can aid foresight and the fundamental risks of the Cold War should not be forgotten, not least as the current generation of senior military and strategists have had most of their formative experiences shaped by the Cold War.

Even so, one of the notable features of the late 1990s was the way in which some of the most senior former military officers argued for rapid progress in nuclear disarmament. People such as General Lee Butler, former Commander of US Strategic Command and responsible for all US strategic nuclear weapons, was one of a number of people to point to the considerable nuclear dangers of the Cold War era, and to argue that the early post-Cold War years should see irreversible moves to minimal nuclear arsenals, leading ultimately to a nuclear-free world.

Russia After the Cold War

For Russia, the Cold War's legacy has been bitter in the extreme, with a formerly powerful state losing much of the territory under its control and experiencing a near-catastrophic attempt to rush to a free market economy that has resulted in stagnation, unemployment, rampant crime, a dismal decline in life expectancy and a rapidly widening rich-poor gap. Having come close to spending itself into the grave to keep up with the much more economically powerful NATO states, Russia then had the added indignity of a near-collapse of its armed forces, demonstrated painfully by its early failure in Chechnya in the mid-1990s.

In terms of future international security, the situation in Russia raises four concerns. One is the risk of a fracturing of the state itself, if conflicts in Chechnya, Dagestan and elsewhere escalate. The second is the determination of the crippled Russian defence industries to maximise their arms exports as a means of ensuring their survival, and a further concern, linked to this, is that expertise in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and missile systems is emigrating to overseas paymasters in the face of low or non-existent salaries in Russia itself. While some western initiatives have attempted to counter this trend, they have been, at best, limited in their effect.

The final concern stems from the state of the Russian armed forces which is resulting in a greater commitment to nuclear weapons as the only powerful military systems remaining for the perceived defence of the country. Russian strategists believe that while some limited renewal of conventional forces is possible, the Russian economy cannot support the level of forces that they consider necessary to maintain the security of the state. The only option seen to be available is an increased reliance on nuclear weapons. Most worryingly, this concentrates on tactical nuclear weapons, with recent reports suggesting that Russia may resume development and production of such weapons to replace its large but ageing arsenal.

The Security Paradigm at the End of the Old Century

The century ended with more than twenty serious conflicts under way, with long-standing disputes in the Middle East and South Asia unresolved, with a crippled former superpower overshadowing numerous conflicts in its current or former territories, and with enduring instability in the Balkans.

From a western perspective, none of the conflicts are global problems. They present formidable difficulties, especially when western interests are directly affected, but many of them are ignored or left to the United Nations to handle, often a recipe for inaction from an organisation with so few resource of its own and dependent on a frequently divided membership.

The western military system is considered to be pre-eminent and firmly in control of global security, at least where western interests are affected, even if it is facing diverse and somewhat unpredictable “threats”. To paraphrase a former CIA Director, speaking early in the 1990s, “we have slain the dragon but now live in a jungle full of poisonous snakes”.⁴

That jungle is seen to contain several different kinds of “snakes”. In the short term they include the activities of “rogue” states such as Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea, the risk that Russia may disintegrate, that China may not continue to accept a western-dominated economy or polity, and that further threats to western energy resources in the Gulf may arise. They also focus on fundamentalism, usually Islamic, with concern over terrorism in a variety of forms, and they are heightened by worries about the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, radiological and especially biological weapons of mass destruction, and also of ballistic and cruise missiles.

All of these perceived threats give the military, defence industries and the strategic studies community plenty of work to do, with a ready belief that new forms of military power can comfortably confront these problems, the Gulf War, Bosnia and even Kosovo being cited as proof of this enduring potential. As a consequence, military forces in most western countries have modified their capabilities away from the Cold War era to face the dangerous jungle of the future.

The massive strategic nuclear forces are being cut down to much smaller, if still versatile forces - no longer an emphasis on a central nuclear exchange that can be survived “with enough shovels”, more a case of small nuclear wars in far-off places. The huge tank armies in Central Europe have been cut right back, as have many of the anti-submarine forces. Instead there is an emphasis on long-range power projection, with the US Navy and Air Force fighting bitter “bomber versus carrier” turf wars at a time of tight budgets.

The army, meanwhile, focuses more on special operations forces and its own brand of force projection, and all three services vie for a slice of the lucrative “Son of Star Wars” missile defence cake. The larger armed forces of the NATO states all seek to develop rapid reaction forces as NATO itself expands eastwards, embroils itself in the Balkans, and talks increasingly of a diffuse “threat from the South”.

Overall, there is a belief that there really are uncertainties and many new dangers, that most come from a handful of rogue states and their terrorist clients, but that robust military capabilities must and will be developed, that diverse revolutions in military affairs will serve mainly to strengthen the west, that there will be occasions for intervention but that, in the final analysis, western military power will be easily up to the task of “keeping the violent peace” in the post-Cold War world.

Thus there are no major new causes of insecurity, and there is potential for keeping the lid on existing problems, a process not without its difficulties but certainly within the capabilities of the United States and its allies. In other words, the early years of the twenty-first century will not see any great changes in the global security environment.

This may be a “reasonably consensual” view, but it is by no means universal. A very different paradigm is beginning to emerge, currently still consigned more to the margins of debate, but attracting increasing attention in some military and strategic circles. This paradigm asserts there are certain major global trends under way that are not normally associated with perceptions of international security, and that are likely to be fundamental parameters or “drivers” in the coming decades. Furthermore, they are trends that will give rise to conflicts that may initially be thought to be capable of control by military means, but may actually require much more fundamental approaches.

The Changed Paradigm for the New Century

On 1 January 1994, a rebellion broke out in the southern Mexican province of Chiapas. It was timed to coincide with the coming into force of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), an agreement seen by the rebels as another example of the free market trends that would further marginalise the majority of the people of Chiapas into greater poverty.

A rebel source gave the reasons for the revolt:

We have nothing, absolutely nothing - not decent shelter, nor land, nor work, nor health, nor food, for education. We do not have the right to choose freely and democratically our education. We have neither peace nor justice for ourselves and our children. But today we say enough! ⁵

The Mexican Army moved to control the Zapatista rebellion, but it has proved difficult to defeat and continues as an insurgency against those elites and their sources of power that manage and control the Mexican economy. But while the rebellion is directed primarily within Mexico, its leaders are clear that this is only in the context of a much broader division of global wealth and poverty.

It is possible to visualise many of the conflicts of the past half century as Epilogue or Prologue Wars. Epilogue Wars are those that illustrate past trends. They include the wars of decolonisation or liberation such as Indo-China, Mau Mau, Malaya and Algeria in the 1940s and 1950s, and the proxy wars of the Cold War era such as Korea and Vietnam. The Zapatista revolt and the Gulf War of 1991 are both prologue wars, each illustrating a trend in international insecurity that together amount to a paradigm shift. The Zapatista revolt is an example of an anti-elite rebellion exacerbated by the growing wealth-poverty divide, and the Gulf War was essentially a resource war, fought over the control of Persian Gulf oil.

The security context for the early decades of the next century is the interaction between a deeply divided world in which the gap between a rich minority and a poor majority is growing, and the effect of environmental constraints on human development. These two factors further interact with the military legacy of the Cold War, expressed by the US defence analyst, Roger Barnett as the:

impact of high-technology weapons and weapons of mass destruction on the ability - and thus the willingness - of the weak to take up arms against the strong.⁶

The impact of environmental constraints on an economically divided world has been recognised for several decades, although its reality has only recently become apparent. It was put with some force by Palmer Newbould at the time of the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, right back in 1972:

My own view is that however successful population policies are, the world population is likely to treble before it reaches stability. If the expectation of this increased population were, for example, to emulate the present lifestyle and resource use of the USA, the demand on world resources would be increased approximately 15-fold; pollution and other forms of environmental degradation might increase similarly and global ecological carrying capacity would then be seriously exceeded. There are therefore global constraints on development set by resources and environment and these cannot be avoided. They will require a reduction in the per caput resource use and environmental abuse of developed nations to accompany the increased resource use of the developing nations, a levelling down as well as up. This conflict cannot be avoided.⁷

Unless there was a change in political and economic behaviour, the end result of the growing pressures of human demand would, according to Edwin Brooks writing at the same time, result in a:

crowded, glowering planet of massive inequalities of wealth buttressed by stark force yet endlessly threatened by desperate people in the global ghettos of the underprivileged.⁸

At the root of this prognosis lie the two themes of socio-economic polarisation and environmental constraints.

The Wealth-Poverty Divide

Although the centrally-planned economies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represented a significant part of the population of the industrialised world, their role in the world economy was relatively small. For the past century, most of the global population has experienced a mixed economy with an emphasis on the capitalist model. In the last twenty years of the century, there was an acceleration in market and trade liberalisation and a decrease in state activity, a process which was accelerated by the collapse of most elements of the centrally planned alternative.

The world economy is now a largely unimodal liberal market system, as distinct from the more bimodal system of the Cold War years. Both during and since the Cold War, this liberal market system has delivered economic growth but has been persistently unsuccessful at ensuring social justice. Put simply, the end result has been the success of the few at the expense of the many. Socio-economic disparities are growing and extreme poverty is experienced by a substantial proportion of the world's population. The actual numbers are massive - between one and two billion - and show little sign of any decrease; they may even be increasing as the world's population continues to grow by over 80 million each year.

The liberal market system is not delivering economic justice and there is a decline in welfare across much of the system, a process exacerbated by the erosion of publicly funded welfare provision. During the Cold War, there were powerful motives in the liberal market economies to ensure the maintenance of social stability, not least through welfare provision. With the ending of the Cold War, and the perhaps temporary ascendancy of a single economic system, these motives have declined, and so has public welfare provision.

Perhaps most important of all, international wealth transfers in the past five decades have consistently gone from the poor to the rich. The main engine of this inequality has been the post-colonial trading system and its endemic imbalances, expressed most persistently in the steadily deteriorating terms of trade borne by most ex-colonial states in the 1950s and 1960s, but continuing through to the 1990s with the brief exception of the commodity boom of the early 1970s. More recently this situation has been exacerbated by the debt crisis which, though it peaked in the 1980s and is now subject to some modest relief, is still a huge hindrance to the development potential of most Southern states.

As well as endemic deep poverty, there is a steadily widening gap between a rich minority of the world's population, located primarily, but not solely, in North America, western Europe and Japan, and most of the rest. One of the crudest measures is that the 300 or so dollar billionaires in the world are collectively as wealthy as the poorest 2.4 billion people. In 1960, the richest 20 per cent of the world's people had 70 per cent of the income; by 1991 their share had risen to 85 per cent while the share of the poorest 20 per cent had declined from 2.3 per cent to 1.7 per cent. Put another way, the ratio of global inequality doubled.⁹

It is also notable that the rich/poor gap widened at a faster rate in the 1980s, as free market liberalisation increased. There are early indications that there has been a further widening in the late 1990s, a consequence of the severe economic problems affecting first South East Asia and then South Asia, Africa and Latin America.

This widening rich-poor divide contrasts markedly with an implicit assumption of most current economic thinking that economic growth is part of the world-wide phenomenon of globalisation that is delivering economic growth for all. This is not so. As John Cavanagh remarked:

More than three-quarters of the new investment into the developing world goes into China and nine other rapidly growing countries. A new global apartheid of 24 richer countries, a dozen rapidly developing countries and 140 that are growing slowly or not at all becomes one of the major new threats to global security.¹⁰

The global divisions are even repeated in some apparently successful Southern states. After Mexico became a member of NAFTA in 1994 and experienced the peso crisis of that year, there was an expectation of rapid economic growth. Overall there have been many developments, but:

... the gap between rich and poor in Mexico is enormous, and it has widened since the peso devaluation. But just as large is the gap in the country's economic recovery, which seems to have taken hold at only the highest income levels and skipped the all-but-forgotten places.¹¹

What is happening in individual countries of the South, and much more harshly across the world, is an increasing rich-poor divide. All the indications are that this will continue over the next 30 years, and may even accelerate, with the development of a trans-state global elite surging ahead of the rest. This elite, of rather more than one billion people, a sixth of the world's population, lives mainly in the countries of the North Atlantic community, Australasia and parts of East Asia.

The distribution in these regions is not uniform, and there are substantial problems of poverty in a number of advanced industrialised states such as the United States. Nor are the poorer states of the South uniformly poor. In some countries, the rich elites represent a tiny minority of the population, but others such as Brazil have quite substantial middle and upper classes, living apart from the majority poor and ever-conscious of their own security vulnerabilities.

Southern elites frequently work very closely with the business interests of major transnational corporations based primarily in the North, and these, too, put a premium on the security of their expatriate personnel and local associates. In the case of energy and mining companies, this will commonly extend to maintaining their own security forces, private armies that ensure the safety of their operations while providing lucrative and welcome employment for recently retired members of special operations forces and others from the armies of the North.

There is a further key factor in the global socio-economic polarisation. In the past four decades, there has been substantial progress in some aspects of development in the South, often achieved against the odds and in a global economic environment that works more in the interests of the states of the North. Progress has been particularly marked in the field of education and literacy and there is current progress in communications. An effect of this is that an increasing number of marginalised people in the South are aware of their very marginalisation and of the rich-poor gap.

Such a circumstance, the combination of a widening rich-poor gap with an increasingly knowledgeable poor, is leading to a "revolution of unfulfilled expectations", an increasingly prominent feature of insurgencies and instability in Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East. The Zapatista rebellion is a recent example, but others include the far more radical Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) movement in Peru. Sendero may be temporarily in retreat, but its tough and often brutal quasi-Maoist ideology took root among the poor both of

the high Andes and the urban shanty towns, resulting in a long and bitter conflict with the Peruvian Army that saw over 20,000 people die.

A similar revolt from the margins is evident in other countries, with much of the attraction of organisations such as Hamas coming from their ability to offer a way out of exclusion. Hamas cannot be understood without appreciating the position of tens of thousands of young Palestinians growing up in the fifty-year-old refugee camps of the Gaza strip.

Of concern in France, if less widely recognised in the rest of Europe, is the bitter civil war in Algeria that has claimed over 60,000 lives in little more than five years. It has been a war fought between a repressive government and radical (and often extreme) fundamentalist groups who gather support from among the millions of marginalised people, especially unemployed young men, who are largely excluded from the Algerian economy. The conflict in Algeria, with its violent effects felt in France, may well be a prototype conflict for the next several decades.

One of the most spectacular examples of a revolt from the margins was the uprising in many parts of Indonesia in 1998, with incidents in Djakarta described vividly by one journalist as the dispossessed rising out of the shanty towns to loot the shopping malls of the rich. Mexico, Algeria, Peru and Indonesia are among the increasing number of examples of anti-elite action and insurgencies that look likely, on present trends, to spread to many other countries - not so much a clash of civilisations, more an age of insurgencies.

Environmental Limitations

If increasing socio-economic polarisation is already apparent, it is happening in parallel with the second global trend, the growing impact of environmental constraints on human activity. In essence, the limitations of the global ecosystem now look likely to make it very difficult if not impossible for human well-being to be continually improved by current forms of economic growth. This is certainly not a new prognosis, and formed a central part of the frequently derided “limits to growth” ideas of the early 1970s. Those ideas stemmed from some of the early experiences of human/environment interaction, notably the problems of pesticide toxicity, land dereliction and air pollution, all initially significant problems in industrialised countries.

These early signs of environmental limits have been joined by much more significant changes in the past two decades. Air pollution became recognised as a regional phenomenon through the experience of acid rain, and a global problem as the depletion of the ozone layer began to develop as a serious problem in the 1980s. Ozone depletion was the first major global effect of human activity. It was brought under some degree of control by international agreements in the late 1980s to ban the most damaging pollutants, but still had a large effect on environmental thinking - here was a human activity that was having a discernible and potentially devastating impact on the entire global ecosystem.

Other problems developing on a global scale also rose to prominence. They included desertification and deforestation, the latter having an immediate effect in terms of soil erosion and flooding, and the salinisation of soils, especially in semi-arid areas. Other forms of resource depletion became evident, most notably the decline in the resources of some of the world's richest fishing grounds. Problems of water shortages and water quality are already severe in many parts of the world. Around half of the population of Southern Asia and Africa does not have access to safe drinking water, and eighty per cent of diseases in these areas stem from unsafe water.

In some parts of the world a persistent failure to come to terms with human environmental impacts produced near-catastrophic results. Nowhere was this more clear than in many parts of the former-Soviet Union, with a drying-out of the Aral Sea, massive problems of pesticide pollution and the radioactive contamination of Arctic environments are the most obvious examples.

Of all the environmental impacts now being witnessed, one stands out above all the others - the development of the phenomenon of climate change as a result of the release of so-called greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide and methane. One of the most fundamental of modern human activities, the combustion of fossil fuels, is demonstrably affecting the global climate. Among the many effects already apparent and likely to accelerate are changes in temperature and rainfall patterns and the intensity of storms.

While rich industrialised countries may be able to cope, albeit at a cost, the changes affecting poor countries will be well beyond their capabilities to handle. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit parts of the United States, killing 52 people and causing damage estimated at \$22 billion, over

70% of it covered by insurance. Six years later, Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras and Nicaragua. The death toll was 11,000, and less than 3% of the \$7 billion damages were insured.

Forms of Conflict

To summarise crudely, the current economic system is not delivering economic justice, and even if it were, there are indications that it would not be environmentally sustainable. This combination of wealth disparities and limits to current forms of economic growth is likely to lead to a crisis of unsatisfied expectations within an increasingly informed global majority of the disempowered.

Such a crisis, as seen from the elites of the North, is a threatening future. As Wolfgang Sachs puts it:

The North now glowers at the South from behind fortress walls. It no longer talks of the South as a cluster of young nations with a bright future, but views it with suspicion as a breeding ground for crises.

At first, developed nations saw the South as a colonial area, then as developing nations. Now they are viewed as risk-prone zones suffering from epidemics, violence, desertification, over-population and corruption.

The North has unified its vision of these diverse nations by cramming them into a category called “risk”. It has moved from the idea of hegemony for progress to hegemony for stability.¹²

In Sach’s view, the North has utilised the resources of the South for generations but has now come up against environmental limits to growth:

Having enjoyed the fruits of development, that same small portion of the world is now trying to contain the explosion of demands on the global environment. To manage the planet has become a matter of security to the North.¹³

Managing the planet means, in the final analysis, controlling conflict, and within the framework of the development/environment interaction, three forms of conflict are likely to come to the fore, stemming from migratory pressures, environmental conflict and anti-elite violence.

1. Migration

The first form of conflict arises from a greater likelihood of increased human migration for economic, social and environmental motives. This movement will focus on regions of relative wealth and is already leading to shifts in the political spectrum in recipient regions, including the increased prevalence of nationalist attitudes and cultural conflict. Such tendencies are often most pronounced in the most vulnerable and disempowered populations within the recipient regions, with extremist political leaders ready to play on fears of unemployment. This trend is seen clearly in western Europe, especially in countries such as France and Austria, where antagonism towards migrants from neighbouring regions such as North Africa and Western Asia has increased markedly. It also figures in the defence postures of a number of countries, with several southern European states reconfiguring their armed forces towards a “threat from the South” across the Mediterranean.

There are already some 40 million people displaced either across state boundaries or within states, and this figure is expected to rise dramatically as one fundamental consequence of global climate change begins to have an effect. Until quite recently, it was thought that climate change would primarily affect northern temperate regions, with a tendency towards more violent weather and progressive warming. The tropics, by contrast, were expected to experience relatively little change. However, climate modelling studies now suggest that there will be major changes in tropical climates, most significantly involving marked decreases in rainfall in many of the most populated areas.

In global terms, there is expected to be a shift in world rainfall patterns, with more rain falling over the oceans and polar regions and less over the tropics. Areas affected will include most of South and Central America, almost the whole of Southern and South-East Asia and the majority of Africa. The effect of this climatic change, likely to take effect increasingly in the early decades of the next century, will be a “drying out” of many of those parts of the humid and semi-humid tropics that currently support the majority of all the world’s people, many of

them living by subsistence agriculture. As a result, the ecological carrying-capacity of the land itself will decline sharply, putting a greatly increased pressure on migration and internal insecurity as poorer people become further marginalised. One assessment suggests that migration could increase ten-fold to 400 million people.¹⁴

Wealthy countries will certainly feel the effects of climate change, but they have a far greater ability to cope by virtue of their wealth, resource base and technical capabilities. Poor countries, by contrast, will face formidable difficulties, many of them translated into migratory pressures. The pressures are likely to be particularly intense from Central into North America, Africa and Western Asia in Europe and South-East Asia towards Australia. The likely response will be a “close the castle gates” approach to security, leading in turn to much suffering and not a little “militant migration” as marginalised migrants are radicalised.

2. Environmental Conflict

The second area of conflict concerns environmental issues, especially the control of physical resources. Locally, over issues such as land and water, it may be restricted primarily to Southern states, though even this could have an impact on Western interests by exacerbating socio-economic marginalisation with concomitant pressure on migration. In two respects, however, it is likely to have a more global impact.

First, a number of key resources are located primarily outside the West (which for this purpose includes Japan). This is not an historical accident, but rather a part of the overall resource shift which has gathered pace over the past century. Industrialisation in Western states was initially based in part on the availability of domestic physical resources. As most of the best reserves in industrialised Western states were exploited, so these countries began to look elsewhere for further resource supplies. Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, the industrialised regions experiencing this resource shift were western Europe and Japan; more recently they have been joined by the United States and, later again, China.

By far the most important strategic resource now is oil, and the Persian Gulf region has rapidly acquired a quite astonishing role in energy resource provision, becoming the world’s key resource zone. This is attributable in part to the location of some 70 per cent of the world’s oil reserves in the region, even allowing for Central Asian and Central American reserves, but

also to the support which the Gulf now provides for oil-based economies in the United States and China, as well as the traditional and more heavily dependent economies of western Europe and Japan.

While oil is by far the top-ranking strategic resource, there are others of significance. These include minerals yielding ferro-alloy metals such as cobalt and tungsten, catalytic metals such as platinum and anticorrosion metals, together with certain non-metallic minerals such as rock phosphate and industrial diamonds. Here again, resources are increasingly located outside the industrialised countries, even including the United States, Canada and Russia.

Several recent confrontations have had much to do with strategic resource location. They include the protracted conflict over Western Sahara, with its remarkable reserves of rock phosphate, a key constituent of compound fertilisers used throughout world agriculture, and the Franco-Belgian interventions in Shaba Province of Zaire/Congo since the mid-1970s, closely related to the cobalt resources of the central African Copper Belt, which amount to some two-thirds of known world cobalt reserves, (cobalt being a key ferro-alloy metal whose uses include missile motors and electronics).

Perhaps most obvious as a resource conflict was the 1990/91 Gulf crisis and war. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, it doubled the oil reserves it controlled to one fifth of the world's total, and was seen by the United States and its allies to be a threat to the Saudi reserves which represented a further quarter. The ability of the United States to assemble a massive force to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait was itself dependent on the existence of numerous bases and port facilities built in the previous decade in case of a threat to Gulf oil from the then Soviet Union during the Cold War years.

3. Insurgencies and Anti-Elite Action

Perhaps least easy to assess is the manner in which environmental constraints on an economically polarised global system will result in competitive and violent responses by the disempowered, both within and between states. As mentioned above, there are many examples of such actions, whether the Zapatista revolt in Mexico, or movements stemming from the disempowered in North Africa, the Middle East and Southern and South East Asia.

At an individual and local level, much of the response from the margins takes the form of criminality, usually by young adult males and directed not just against wealthier sectors of society but often against the poor and unprotected. For middle-class elites in many Southern states, though, security is an every-day fact of life, with people moving from secure work-places through travel in private cars to gated communities and leisure facilities with 24-hour protection. For the richest sectors of society, security extends to armed bodyguards and stringent anti-kidnapping precautions, with a host of specialist companies offering their services.

This is the environment that is already the norm throughout most countries of the South, and the widening rich/poor gap suggests it will get worse. But the more difficult and potentially more important problem stems from substantial new social movements directed, often with violence, against the elites. Predictions are difficult but three features are relevant.

The first is that anti-elite movements may have recourse to political, religious, nationalist or ethnic justifications, with these frequently being fundamentalist, simplistic and radical. Many recent analyses focus on the belief systems themselves, with much emphasis placed by western writers on religious fundamentalisms, especially within the Islamic world. While such religious movements are significant, they are far from being alone in serving as a motivation against marginalisation and for empowerment, with ethnic, nationalist and political ideologies, cultures or beliefs also being of great significance. At times, it is as if the “Islamic threat” is being erected to replace the Soviet threat of the Cold War years, an attractive yet thoroughly dangerous simplification of a much more complex set of processes.

The second feature is that anti-elite movements may be more prevalent in the poorer states and regions of the world, and they may therefore be considered of little concern to the relatively small number of wealthy states that dominate the world economy. But in an era of globalisation, instability in some part of the majority world can have a considerable effect on financial markets throughout the world, making the security of local elites of real concern to the West. Wealthy states are dependent on resources from the South, on cheap labour supplies and on the development of new markets for their advanced industrial products. Fifty years ago, a civil disturbance in a country of the South might have its effect in the North within weeks. Now, it can be within minutes.

Finally, there is sufficient evidence from economic and environmental trends to indicate that marginalisation of the majority of the world's people is continuing and increasing, and that it is extremely difficult to predict how and when different forms of anti-elite action may develop. It was not predictable that Gussman's teachings in Peru would lead to Sendero Luminosa, nor was the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico anticipated. When the Algerian government curtailed elections for fear that they would bring a rigorous Islamic party to power, no one predicted a bloody conflict that would claim tens of thousands of lives.

What should be expected is that new social movements will develop that are essentially anti-elite in nature and draw their support from people on the margins. In different contexts and circumstances they may have the roots in political ideologies, religious beliefs, ethnic, nationalist or cultural identities, or a complex combination of several of these. They may be focused on individuals or groups but the most common feature is an opposition to existing centres of power. They may be sub-state groups directed at the elites in their own state or foreign interests, or they may hold power in states in the South, and will no doubt be labelled as rogue states as they direct their responses towards the North.

Revolt of the Middle Kingdoms

States that may be led by radical anti-western regimes or dictatorships can readily be regarded as rogue states, a catch-all term increasingly applied to smaller states considered to threaten regional western interests. But beyond them are much more powerful states that may have their own entrenched elites yet are unwilling to accept a global polity dominated by a western military, political and economic alliance. China, India and Iran are all examples of states who, in many ways, seek to challenge a western hegemony, and many of their attitudes and outlooks are shared by numerous other states of the South.

There are many examples of these divergent views and outlooks. Opposition to the further development of trade reforms through the World Trade Organisation is widespread in the South, with such reforms seen primarily to benefit powerful western market economies and transnational corporations (TNCs). There remains resentment at the attempts to force through a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) with its "small print" likely to disadvantage weaker Southern states in their dealings with TNCs.

There is a deep and persistent bitterness at the entrenched attitudes of northern states towards problems of the global environment. Across much of the South it is believed, with not a little passion, that Northern states have been primarily responsible for the development of global environmental problems yet are deeply reluctant to accept responsibility or to take remedial action. In particular, as the changes in the climate take effect due primarily to greenhouse gas emissions from the industrialised world, poorer countries will be far less able to cope with the changes, yet are expected to curb or limit their industrial development while the North pays little more than lip-service to the critical need to curb its polluting profligacy.

The perception of hypocrisy extends to many other areas. In the arena of weapons proliferation and arms control, numerous third world states see western attitudes to controlling nuclear proliferation as a classic case of “do as we say, not as we do”, a view taking on an added dimension with the United States failing to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was roundly condemned across the world, yet the subsequent Gulf War was widely seen as a western military action, mounted immediately the necessary forces had been assembled, that had far more to do with maintaining control of Gulf oil than correcting a wrong, and sidelined the UN into the bargain.

Even the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 was seen as a “remote control” example of economic targeting - causing \$60 billion of damage to the Serbian economy by an alliance deeply unwilling to take risks with its own military, and once again readily by-passing the UN. For public opinion in much of the West, the Serbia/Kosovo War was a just war against an aggressive regime. In much of the rest of the world, it was a selective war using selective force against an objectionable regime, yet one that was no worse than many that continue to maintain friendly relations with the west.

Many of the new parameters of insecurity may operate at sub-state level, and will be directed at local elites and their collaborative western interests, but they will operate within the context of a broader “axis of disagreement” between western governments and leading states of the South. While this may not deteriorate into conflict, it could further encourage a perception of “the civilised west versus the rest”. During the Cold War, the west saw the Soviet bloc as the ever-dangerous ideological giant, encroaching on and threatening the free world. It will be all too easy for western attitudes to a new world disorder to coalesce into a perception of “them

and us” - a combination of insurgencies and competitive southern states threatening the peace, security and economic well-being of the civilised west.

Responding to Insecurity

While predicting the precise nature and occurrence of rebellions, insurgencies and anti-elite action is hardly possible, it is an eminently reasonable prognosis that underlying trends will lead to many such crises, given the recent experience of a number of countries of the South coupled with global economic and environmental trends. Moreover, these will frequently be seen as threats to Western security.

On present trends, the common response to disorder within states will be one of regaining and maintaining control, rather than addressing root causes. This will depend on the maintenance of appropriate security and intelligence capabilities, with aid from more powerful states where necessary. A feature of the recent post-Cold War years has been the reconfiguring of the military forces of western powers towards long-range intervention with rapid deployment capabilities, but such forces are essentially weapons of last resort, and two other areas of activity come first.

One is the increasing use of private security organisations that goes well beyond the level of personal bodyguards, local protection of mines, oil-fields or factories. Privatised security now extends to the provision of what are essentially well-equipped mercenary armies and paramilitaries, employed by local elites, transnational corporations or even governments. Such mercenary forces are not new, and were a fairly common feature of the final stages of de-colonisation, but they have increased in power and capabilities in a number of countries of the South, notably in Latin America.

The second area of activity is the provision of intensive counter-insurgency training by western states, especially the US. Again, this is not new - during the Cold War, anti-communist counter-insurgency was a key feature of the security policy of the United States and, to an extent, several European members of NATO, with the French especially active in Africa and the British in the Persian Gulf.

The motivation is not now concerned with winning a Cold War against an international communist “threat”, for there is no longer a coherent ideological enemy to oppose with vigour while conveniently maintaining a *status quo* suited to western interests. The motivation is now directed at maintaining local elites and the considerable western economic interests with which they are so commonly associated, against a wide variety of threats from the margins.

Overall, the process is one of keeping the lid on dissent and instability - “lidism” - by means of public order control that will, if necessary, extend to the use of military force. For the most part, little attention is paid to the fundamental causes of instability, the economic processes that continue to ensure the marginalisation of the majority world, and the failure to address core problems of the global environment. The old security paradigm survives - maintain control, maintain the *status quo*, do not address the underlying problems.

An Obsolete Paradigm

Quite apart from the raw injustice of the present world order, such a paradigm is threatened with obsolescence on its own terms in that it fails to recognise the innate vulnerabilities of western elite society. Barnett talks of the increasing ability of the weak to take up arms against the strong, and Brooks presents a picture of a crowded, glowering planet. Both touch on significant changes that have taken place as industrial societies have become more susceptible to disruption, and proliferation of military technologies are providing “force equalisers”, weapons that are within the reach of intermediate states but that can counter much more advanced military power.

To illustrate this trend, two examples are worthy of more than a little attention. One concerns the potential for states to develop relatively cheap weapons of mass destruction, principally biological weapons. The other focuses on developments in political violence, and especially the use of conventional explosives against vulnerable sources of elite power.

The Iraqi Biological Weapons Programme and its Implications

Taking the biological weapons example first, the case of Iraq is remarkably illuminating. Following the Israeli destruction of Iraq’s Osiraq reactor, Saddam Hussein’s regime embarked on a more diverse series of routes to nuclear weapons in the early 1980s, and accompanied this with a sustained effort to produce a range of chemical and biological weapons. The

former were used extensively in the war against Iran and the Kurds, with little comment from western states who gave tacit support to Iraq in its conflict with that perceived greater threat to western interests, revolutionary Iran.

Biological weapons research was initiated at Iraq's main chemical warfare centre at Muthana in 1985, work starting on anthrax and botulinum toxin. Progress was rapid, the work was transferred to Al Salman and, within a year, laboratory and field trials had been conducted on animals including monkeys and sheep, a single-cell protein plant at Taji was taken over for large-scale production of botulinum toxin, while at Al Salman, production of anthrax was rapidly scaled up.¹⁵

By the end of 1987, the decision to go ahead with full-scale biological weapons production had been taken and in March 1988, an entirely new site was selected for BW production at Al Hakam which would also include a separate research facility. The centre was largely completed within six months and an intensive search was undertaken throughout Iraq for suitable equipment. Large fermentation units were brought in, botulinum production began in April 1989 and anthrax the following month. According to a UN Special Commission report, the Al Hakam facility produced 6,000 litres of concentrated botulinum toxin and 8,425 litres of anthrax in 1990 alone.

Even this was only one part of the overall programme - as the Iraqi BW efforts gathered pace, a wide range of other potential biological warfare agents were examined. In 1988, work started on the bacterium that causes gas gangrene, the idea being that if cluster munitions are impregnated with this organism, the chances of wounds resulting in gas gangrene are greatly increased, severely stretching the medical facilities of the opposing forces. Also in 1988, studies commenced into aflatoxin, a relatively rare cancer-inducing mycotoxin, and on other mycotoxins that can cause vomiting and diarrhoea and, unlike most toxins, can be absorbed through the skin.

In a separate project, the Iraqis even investigated anti-crop warfare, developing a programme to produce large quantities of the plant disease organism that causes cover smut of wheat, a potentially devastating disease. It is probable that this was intended for use in economic warfare against the wheat crops of Iran, the staple food of that country.

The Iraqi BW programme also involved work on viruses. This included studies on a rotavirus causing diarrhoea which can lead to dehydration and death, and the virus causing haemorrhagic conjunctivitis, an acute disease causing extreme pain and temporary blindness, and likely to have an intensely debilitating effect on victims.

Field trials of biological weapons commenced in 1988 and included work on 122mm rockets, bombs and spray tanks. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and the immediate escalation of the crisis as coalition forces moved into the Gulf region, the Iraqi BW programme was greatly intensified and directed towards having useable weapons before coalition military operations could begin.

By January 1991, Iraq had 166 bombs ready for use, 100 filled with botulinum, 50 with anthrax and 16 with aflatoxin. An emergency programme to produce warheads for the Al Hussein medium-range ballistic missile was initiated in August 1990. By January 1991, 13 missiles armed with botulinum warheads were ready, together with 10 missiles with anthrax and 2 missiles with aflatoxin. The 25 missiles were deployed to four locations and remained there throughout the war.

These, and chemical warheads, were intended for use in the event of the destruction of Baghdad by nuclear weapons during the Gulf War. Moreover, authority to launch the missiles was pre-delegated from Baghdad to regional commanders, an extraordinarily risky move, giving rise to the possibility of unauthorised use of weapons of mass destruction during a fast-moving and, for the Iraqi, chaotic and increasingly disastrous military confrontation.

In retrospect, the most significant feature may be that it is now known that the US intelligence community was aware of the major features of the Iraqi BW programme, including the assessment that the Iraqis were likely to use weapons of mass destruction if the survival of the regime was threatened. The US-led coalition may have stopped the war at Basra because of the fear of casualties, or the need to maintain the integrity of Iraq, even under a surviving Saddam Hussein, or the war may have been halted because of the Iraqi BW deterrent. Whatever the reason, or reasons, the deterrent was there, and gave the regime a final form of protection.

Moreover, it is not even clear that the Iraqi biological weapons would have been effective - the missiles that were fired in the war, with their conventional high-explosive warheads, were both inaccurate and prone to break-up during their flights. The point is that there was no way of knowing whether or not the BW-armed missiles and bombs would have worked, just that Iraq had invested heavily in developing them and had the weapons ready to use.

The overall experience is significant in two respects. The first is that it is an example of a weak power having the capability to deter a coalition of very powerful states ranged against it. Secondly, it shows how a state with an intermediate technical capability can develop weapons of mass destruction in a relatively short period of time - Iraq's entire biological weapons programme was the result of a process of research, development and production undertaken in just five years. Taken together, they illustrate the "equalizer" effect of technology proliferation, an approach readily available to other states and also to sub-state groups, whether acting on their own or as clients of states.

Economic Targeting by Paramilitaries

The second "pointer" to the fracturing of military power relates to a number of instances of violent sub-state actions in recent years. Many could be cited. In Britain, the Provisional IRA developed the tactic of city centre bombing, coupled with wholesale disruption of transport. In 1992-94 in the City of London, and in 1996 in London and Manchester, huge bombs caused nearly £2 billion of damage and killed and injured many people. In the United States, the Oklahoma bomb caused mass casualties and led to much soul-searching. Both instances had substantial effects on the security thinking of the states concerned, although much of it was conducted outside of the public domain. In 1999, a series of bombings of apartment blocks in Russia causing hundreds of deaths were linked to the conflict in Chechnya, and influenced the course of the brutal Russian assaults on Chechnya later in the year.

In the context of the changing security paradigm, however, five other incidents are indicative - the destruction of the Bank of Sri Lanka by Tamil Tiger guerrillas, the Air France hi-jacking in Algiers, the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack, the Khobar Towers bomb in Saudi Arabia and the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York. Only two of these achieved their aims, but the three "failures" are also likely to be indicative of future trends.

Colombo

The bitter conflict between the Tamil Tiger separatists (the LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government forces had been under way for 12 years in 1965 and, in October of that year, the Sri Lankan Army embarked on a costly campaign to oust the LTTE from what was perceived to be their core stronghold in the northern city of Jaffna. While the army succeeded, it was a hollow victory in three senses; most of the LTTE forces simply melted away to re-group in other areas, the action was hugely costly to the army, with over 600 killed, and the LTTE guerrillas responded by increasing their use of economic targeting against the Sri Lankan state which had previously included bomb attacks on energy and communications targets in and around the capital city of Colombo.

The most substantial attack came on 31 January 1996, just seven weeks after the fall of Jaffna. In this incident, a suicide bomber drove a truck containing around half a ton of high explosive into the entrance to the Central Bank at the heart of Colombo's central business district. The effects were appalling, with nearly 100 people killed and 1,400 injured. Many key buildings were destroyed or severely damaged, including the bank itself, the Celinko Insurance Building, the Colombo World Trade Centre, the Air Lanka offices, the Ceylon Hotels Corporation building, the Bank of Ceylon and several hotels. While vigorously denied by the government of Sri Lanka, the bombing had a considerable effect on business confidence, made worse by a further bombing of the World Trade Centre nearly two years later.¹⁶

Paris

French experience of paramilitary activity by Algerian radicals is also relevant. This arises from the bitter and protracted internal conflict in Algeria, and the belief among radical anti-government groups, such as the GIA, that the French authorities have offered support to the Algerian government. A result has been a series of bomb attacks in France, especially the targeting of the Metro. A more extreme incident involved an attempted large-scale attack on Paris which, if it had succeeded, would have caused massive loss of life.

On 24 December, 1994, an Air France Airbus A300 bound for Paris was hi-jacked by four members of a radical Algerian militant group. 239 passengers and crew were on board, three of whom were subsequently killed by the hi-jackers. After two days of negotiation, the plane was allowed to leave Algiers and landed at Marseilles, ostensibly to refuel. The aim of the hi-

jackers was reported to be to destroy the aircraft in mid-air over Paris, killing themselves and all the remaining passengers and crew, as well as causing heavy casualties on the ground. If the plan had succeeded, the death toll could have been many hundreds. In the event, the aircraft was stormed by a French commando unit at Marseilles and all of the hi-jackers were killed.

Tokyo

The Tokyo subway incident in 1995 is notable as the first large-scale incident by a non-state group employing chemical weapons with the intention of causing mass loss of life. In the attack, on 20 March 1995, members of the Aum Shinrikyo religious sect are alleged to have released sarin nerve gas at numerous points on the subway system, affecting three subway lines and 15 stations over a distance of more than eight miles, mostly located in downtown Tokyo. Twelve people died and 5,500 were made ill, some of them seriously. The intention was to damage the core of the Tokyo urban transport system, primarily by causing maximum casualties running into thousands of deaths. As well as the terrible human costs, the effect on business confidence would have been extreme had the nerve gas worked as intended.

The attack, though, was bungled; the nerve agent was impure, its dispersal inefficient and the ventilation system of the subway seems to have diluted the gas far more rapidly than anticipated. Relatively few people were killed, even though thousands suffered harmful effects. Even so, police investigations later suggested that the sect was also working on other potential weapons of mass destruction including anthrax.

Dhahran

After the Gulf War, the United States retained substantial forces in Saudi Arabia, largely to contain Iraq, and many of these forces were centred on the bases at Dhahran. On 25 June 1996, a truck bomb was detonated outside the Khobar Towers block of flats, part of a complex used to house US troops. The devastation was considerable, leaving a huge crater in front of the flats and tearing the front of the complex down. There were over 500 casualties, including the deaths of 19 Americans who were in the flats at the time.

For the United States it was a security nightmare to be matched by the Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam two years later. While it had long been US practice to deploy troops, aircraft and ships to bases throughout the world, there was always the difficulty of

maintaining security, although the paramilitary attack on the Khobar Towers and the consequent loss of life had not been anticipated. For US forces in Saudi Arabia, the solution to the problem was expensive in the extreme - if some of the existing bases were insecure, then new facilities had to be built. Dhahran was run down as a base and many of the forces were moved to a new base, constructed at a cost of \$500 million, at a secure and remote site in the heart of Saudi Arabia. US forces ostensibly in Saudi Arabia to protect that country were themselves under such threat from paramilitaries that they were virtually in a state of siege.¹⁷

New York

Although Dhahran was an example of overseas vulnerabilities, perhaps the most revealing incident in terms of current trends was the attack on the New York World Trade Centre in 1993. In this seven-building complex, the two largest components are the North and South Towers, each of 110 storeys, separated by the 26-storey Vista Hotel and sharing a six-story basement with it. During a normal working day the whole complex is occupied by 50,000 people, mostly in the twin towers.

Shortly after mid-day on 26 February, 1993, a large van bomb, estimated to contain 1.5 tons of explosive, detonated in an underground car park on Basement Level 2, close to the south wall of the North Tower, and underneath one end of the Vista Hotel. The bomb was made up of a substantial quantity of home-manufactured explosive and is believed to have been surrounded by hydrogen gas cylinders to amplify the explosion by creating a fuel-air effect. This is a process which had been employed in the bombing of a barracks in Beirut, in October 1983, when 241 US Marines were killed.

The bomb failed to collapse either the North Tower or the hotel, but damage was severe and casualties were high. Six people were killed and over 1,000 injured. The explosion hit the communications centre on Basement Level 1, above the point of detonation, knocking out most power and emergency facilities and leaving a crater nearly 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep. It deposited many hundreds of tons of debris on to lower basement levels, severely damaging the complex's air conditioning and emergency generating systems, and ruptured pipes releasing over 2 million gallons of water into the lower levels.

Structural damage to the North Tower was relatively minor, but the Vista Hotel was severely affected and required emergency bracing to control the risk of collapse, a very difficult

process undertaken with great skill in the hours and days immediately following the bomb. It was later concluded that a catastrophic failure of either the hotel or the North Tower had been avoided, in part because the bomb was incorrectly positioned and insufficiently powerful, but primarily because the complex had been built to standards in excess of those required at the time of construction.

If the bomb had succeeded in its purpose, the North Tower would have collapsed on to the Vista Hotel and the South Tower. Casualties would have been around 30,000 killed, the most devastating single attack since the atom bombing of Nagasaki nearly fifty years earlier. A number of people, widely described as Islamic fundamentalists acting from broadly anti-American motives, were later charged, tried and imprisoned for the bomb attack, although there were also unconfirmed reports of an Iraqi connection. Because the bomb failed in its primary purpose, the attack attracted relatively little attention from international security specialists, although it had a considerable impact within domestic security circles and caused a review of security in high-rise buildings throughout the United States.

The Tamil Tiger attack in Colombo succeeded in its aim but its significance was not widely recognised, and the impact of the Khobar Towers bomb was mainly within the US military. The Tokyo, Paris and New York incidents all failed to achieve their aims. This “run of luck” may be hugely welcome, but it may have served to obscure a trend - that it is becoming more likely that sub-state actors, whether or not aided by states, can cause massive casualties and disruption in confrontations that do not follow the usual patterns of war. The Air France hijack was intended to kill many hundreds, the Tokyo subway nerve gas attack was intended to kill thousands and the World Trade Centre bomb might have killed 30,000.

In the coming decades, counter-state and counter-society abilities are likely to become progressively more available to radical groups. In part, this will be due to acquired knowledge and experience of economic targeting using conventional forms of destruction, in part it will be due to the availability of biological and chemical systems and possibly crude radiological and nuclear systems. Overall, these trends suggest that seemingly invulnerable states, however powerful and wealthy they may be, have innate weaknesses that can be readily exploited in an era of asymmetric warfare.

Business - and Thinking - As Usual

Some military analysts are aware of these trends, they are finding it difficult to come to terms with them and, for the most part, they are seriously worried people. Most senior military, though, along with most students of international security, are failing to recognise what is happening, and have yet to escape from an almost quaint reliance on military superiority.

A graphic illustration of this was the *Global 95 Wargame* at the Naval War College in July 1995, a “twin crisis” wargame centred on Korea and the Persian Gulf. In both cases, chemical weapons were used, but in the Gulf, the crisis escalated and a resurgent Iraq used biological weapons to devastating effect against US forces and Saudi civilians. The US responded with a nuclear attack on Baghdad, ending the war. As *Defense News* reported, the wargame raised a number of critical issues.

The United States has virtually no response to the use of such potentially devastating weapons other than threatening to use nuclear weapons, a Joint Staff official said Aug. 22. But it is unclear whether even nuclear weapons would provide a deterrent, unless the US was willing to take the difficult moral step of destroying a city, he said.

On the other hand, if the United States did launch a nuclear attack in response, “no country would use those weapons for the next 100 years,” the official said.¹⁸

Would that really have been the result of such an action? In all probability there would have been retaliation to at least the same level of destruction. The nuclear bombing of Baghdad in this scenario would no doubt have ended the war, and perhaps destroyed the Iraqi leadership, but the destruction of one of the historic cities of the Arab world, and the first use of nuclear weapons since 1945, would have occasioned retaliation directly against the United States.

The most probable pattern would have been the acquisition by paramilitary groups of appropriate weapons of mass destruction for use against targets in the United States. In 1995, the Pentagon conducted a planning exercise which posited one such attack. In this scenario, a terrorist group introduced anthrax into the ventilation system of the New York Stock Exchange, aiming to infect and kill the people who run the world’s largest stock exchange.

Many forms of retaliation would be possible, including radiological, nerve gas or anthrax attacks on centres of population, commerce or government in New York, Chicago, Washington or a dozen other cities. They might have taken place many months or even years after the war, but there is every probability that they would have happened. The idea of “scaring off” states or paramilitaries, as suggested by the commentator on the *Global 95 Wargame*, is an extreme example of “lidism”, a dangerous approach that indicates a potentially fatal misunderstanding of the ways of the post-Cold War world.

Shifting the Paradigm

This analysis argues three points. The first is that the factors most likely to influence the development of conflict in the coming decades are the socio-economic divide, environmental constraints and the spread of military technologies, not least weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, this is likely to lead to conflicts involving anti-elite action from within the marginalised majority, rapidly increasing migratory pressures and conflict concerning environmental factors, especially strategic resources, all within the context of middle-ranking states unwilling to accept a western hegemony. Finally, the western perception that the *status quo* can be maintained, if need be by military means, is not sustainable, given the vulnerabilities of advanced wealthy states to paramilitary action and asymmetric warfare.

It follows that it is necessary to develop a new paradigm around the policies likely to enhance peace and limit conflict, with this paradigm placing far more emphasis on a process of common global security predicated on action to be taken to reverse the socio-economic polarisation, enhance sustainable economic development and control processes of proliferation and militarisation.

The aim of the final two sections of this paper is to provide a brief sketch of the features of such an approach as they may apply in broad terms and as they might be taken up by an individual state such as Britain.

At the global level, the broad shifts in policy are relatively straightforward. Reversing the trend towards a great wealth-poverty divide requires a number of key changes in the policies of the main western states. Most important of all is to develop a process of trade reform that

reverses several decades of trading obstacles to third world development.¹⁹ Such reform has been advocated by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other global bodies for nearly forty years, but there has been a consistent unwillingness on the part of wealthy Northern states to accept it. Nevertheless, there remains an urgent requirement for a structuring of world trade that provides economic advantage rather than handicap to southern states, not least through a comprehensive integrated commodities programme, but also through a broad pattern of trade preferences, including invisibles, that stimulate southern economic development.

A second policy development, of immediate importance and potentially able to lead to rapid improvements in socio-economic well-being, is a radical programme of debt cancellation, going far beyond the welcome but limited advances of the latter part of 1999. While trade reform and debt cancellation can be linked to good governance and socially fair internal development policies, it hardly behoves western states to impose such governance, given their role in limiting the development potential of southern states in recent decades.

There is also a role for direct official and non-governmental assistance, especially in areas of extreme need. Even the meeting of the official UN target of 0.7% of GNP as official development assistance would be represent real progress, although the requirement is for assistance that far exceeds such as target. A substantial source of additional development assessment would be a tax on market speculation such as the so-called Tobin tax.

Responses to environmental constraints need to focus initially and primarily on the activities of wealthy industrialised states. The most urgent requirement is for rapid progress on the control of greenhouse gases, probably the most important single issue on the security agenda for the next half century. Beyond that, there is a need for a wide range of actions directed towards environmentally sustainable economic activity, especially in the areas of energy conservation, use of renewable energy resources, low-impact transport and materials recycling.

As the excessive environmental impact of industrial economies is curbed, a parallel process of enhancing the sustainable development in less developed countries is required. While most of the initiatives and capabilities will reside within such states, one of the most valuable functions of development assistance will be to aid this process.

Finally, the curbing of weapons proliferation may be dealing more with a symptom than a cause of conflict, yet it has an important role that has been badly damaged by recent reverses, not least the US Senate's CTBT vote and the deterioration in East-West relations. Progress is urgently needed on the further control of existing nuclear armaments as well as nuclear proliferation; the Chemical Weapons Convention needs a further boost to see its more general implementation; negotiations on strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are a priority; and codes of practice aiming to control and curb the trade in light weapons remain important.

In more general terms, there remains a need to promote, principally through the UN system, commonly accepted processes of conflict prevention, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. Within Europe, the side-lining of the OSCE relative to NATO is an indicator of how long and difficult that journey is likely to be.

Overall, this brief review entails a radically different approach to international peace and security than that currently on offer. It advocates major changes in trade, development and environmental responses but sees these as essential features of common security - policies that are necessary in the interests of human justice but are also in the interests of the current wealthier parts of the human community.

Policies for a Middle Power

The changes in policy being suggested represent a radical change of direction, especially for the more powerful industrialised states of the North. Yet there are sufficient signs of insecurity, instability and conflict to indicate that they are necessary changes. They are more likely to be implemented as the current paradigm of "top down" international security control is challenged in a number of quarters. Significant among these will be leaders and thinkers in Southern countries, and non-government organisations and campaigning groups in the North and South. They could be aided by even minor changes in policies in individual Northern countries and in interstate organisations such as the European Union. Most of all, though, they would be stimulated if one or more Northern states begins to take substantial domestic initiatives, combined with agenda setting on the international scene.

Britain is in a potentially influential position on at least three counts. It is a member of the European Union, the second most important trading group in the world, it retains unusually close links with the United States and, through the Commonwealth, it is part of an organisation that spans continents and cultures and represents more than a quarter of the world's people. A role for Britain in promoting peace with justice in the early 21st century would have two components - changes in domestic and foreign policy that demonstrated a commitment to an equitable world order, and a sustained programme of agenda setting among the international community.

There are many potential policy initiatives, some of them building on recent developments:

- enhance the recent government debt relief policies and advocate them forcefully within the EU, OECD and G8, use powerful government influence to encourage positive policies from the financial sector;
- develop international trade policies for Britain designed specifically to help the poorest nations and argue for them in the EU and World Trade Organisation;
- increase the international development budget still further - moving progressively towards the UN target of 0.7% of GNP, and direct that budget even more towards poverty relief and sustainable self-reliance while working to encourage good governance;
- encourage and accelerate the take-up of new technologies to counter greenhouse gas emissions, invest vigorously in greatly improved energy efficiency and develop a major national programme on renewable energy resources;
- ensure that issues of climate change, especially in relation to development, are consistently high on the international political agenda, especially in groups such as the G8, EU and OECD.
- substantially expand climate change research, giving Britain a world leadership role in this crucial area of scientific research, and institute a high-powered programme of research into countering the effects of climate change in poor countries;

- develop Britain's role in peacekeeping training, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building to make it an acknowledged world leader in this field, work to enhance the role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and to improve the capabilities of the United Nations in pursuing the Agenda for Peace;
- enhance UK policies on arms control, especially the critical and urgent need to improve the control of biological weapons and the need to re-invigorate the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, maintain the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty process and avoid the loss of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty;
- enhance and aid the development of the EU Code on arms transfers as a basis for domestic policy and Anglo-American cooperation.

While there are many other potential developments, these indicate major examples of policy initiatives that would systematically demonstrate best practice while giving Britain the political authority to propose numerous international initiatives.

It has to be recognised, though, that the developing problems of international security cannot be considered specific to individual government departments. The Ministry of Defence has a key role in several areas, not least peacekeeping and arms control, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office relates also to arms control, conflict resolution, arms exports control, the work of the United Nations and many other areas. The Department for International Development is centrally involved in development, and environmental issues concern it and several other departments, not least the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Department of Trade and Industry. Debt relief concerns DFID and the FCO, yet it is clearly a Treasury issue.

All this indicates an urgent need for co-ordination across departments of state and also an integrated capacity to think through issues that simply cut across current areas of government. There is certainly a need for a central strategic policy organisation focusing specifically on the coming issues of international security.

If, over the next five years, Britain was to develop its domestic policies and international advocacy, it might well end up providing the country with a coherent role in international

affairs that would make it one of the most influential states in the world. It could give Britain the role for which, in the view of many, it has been searching for half a century.

Conclusion

Writers on international security in the early post-Cold War days were liable to moan about the complexity of the new global security environment, contrasting it with the much more simple “them and us” structure of the Cold War era. This analysis suggests that the new security agenda is hardly more complex - a deeply divided world faces environmental constraints and, unless the divisions are healed and sustainable development is at the core of that process, we face a deeply unstable and potentially conflict-ridden world in the early decades of the next century.

There are two main obstacles to facing up to this challenge. The first, and by far the most substantial, is that the necessary response will involve considerable limits being placed on the wealth and power of the elite global minority, requiring radical economic and political changes that are substantially greater than anything experienced in the last half century. The second is that most western thinking and writing on international security is deeply ethnocentric and conservative. With few exceptions it seems incapable of rising above a narrow concern with western elite security and well-being, yet this paradigm shift has to take place if the new thinking on security is to be embraced and developed.

If there is no change in thinking, western security policy will continue to be based on the narrow assumption that the *status quo* can be maintained, an elite minority can maintain its position, environmental problems can be marginalised and the lid can be kept on dissent and instability. Little or no attempt will be made to address the core causes of insecurity, even if failure to do so threatens the elite minority as well as the marginalised majority.

We are left with a challenge that may seem insuperable, yet there are many signs of a change in thinking. Some of the leading figures of the Cold War now accept that it was a highly dangerous era, and some now advocate policies of nuclear disarmament that would have been regarded as widely radical. A substantial public campaign across many western countries on

the debt crisis has begun to translate into government action, issues of fair trade, particularly around the much criticised policies of the World Trade Organisation, are coming to the fore. Environmental issues are prominent, many of them linked to core problems such as those arising from climate change.

These are relatively small indicators of the potential for changed thinking on the broad issues of international security. In broad terms, though, the early decades of the 21st century could be an era in which deep divisions in the world community lead to instability and violence that will transcend boundaries and affect rich and poor alike. They could also be an era in which major efforts are made that succeed in developing a socially just and environmentally sustainable world order. If progress of this kind is to be made, at least some of the impetus will have to come from a vigorous intellectual response, not least from universities. With all the limitations of under-resourcing, bureaucratisation, research assessments and the rest, university faculty still retain an independence that is rarely possible elsewhere. This gives them a particular responsibility in entertaining new thinking on security.

Notes

1. For data on wars and casualties of war, see successive editions of: Ruth Leger Sivard, *World Military Expenditure*, especially 1996 edition, World Priorities Inc., Washington, DC.
2. A recent re-assessment of the Cold War, including information on crises and nuclear accidents, is: Alan P. Dobson (ed.), *Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Cold War*, Ashgate Press, Aldershot, 1999.
3. Information concerning the NATO Operation Able Archer was first reported by: Gordon Brook-Shepherd, "When the World Almost Went to War", *Sunday Telegraph*, 16 October 1988.
4. Statement by James Woolsey at Senate Hearings, Washington DC, February, 1993.
5. Quoted in: James Stephenson, "The 1994 Zapatista Rebellion in Southern Mexico - an Analysis and Assessment", *Occasional Paper Number 12*, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, The Army Staff College, Camberley, 1995.
6. Roger W Barnett, "Regional Conflict: Requires Naval Forces", *Proceedings of the US Naval Institute*, June 1992, pp. 28-33.
7. Palmer Newbould, "The Global Ecosystem", chapter in *Human Ecology and World Development*, Anthony Vann and Paul Rogers (eds), Plenum Press, London and New York, 1974.

8. Edwin Brooks, "The Implications of Ecological Limits to Growth in Terms of Expectations and Aspirations in Developed and Less Developed Countries", chapter in *Human Ecology and World Development*, *op.cit.*
9. Figures from: Bimal Ghosh, "Glaring Inequality is Growing Between and Inside Countries", *International Herald Tribune*, 11 December 1996.
10. John Cavanagh, "Globalization: Fine for Some and Bad for Many", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 January 1997.
11. Anthony DePalma, "Mexico's Economic Turnaround is Lost on the Poor", *International Herald Tribune*, 13 August 1997.
12. Reported in: Susan Litherland, "North-South: Global Security Elbows Out Development", *Inter Press Service International News*, London, 2 December 1993.
13. *Ibid.*
14. David Rind, "Drying Out the Tropics", *New Scientist*, 6 May 1995.
15. See UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) Report to the UN Security Council, 15 October 1995.
16. Details of the Colombo, Paris, Tokyo and New York incidents, and an analysis of economic targeting by paramilitary groups is in: Paul Rogers, "Economic Targeting and Provisional IRA Strategy", *Studies in Political Violence*, 96.1, University of Bradford, 1996.
17. Steven Lee Meyers, "In the Arabian Desert, a Secure Home for GIs", *International Herald Tribune*, 30 December 1997.
18. Theresa Hitchens, "Wargame Finds US Falls Short in Biowar", *Defense News*, 28 August 1995.
19. For a detailed account of attempts to re-balance the North-South trading relationship, see: Nassau Adams, *Worlds Apart*, Zed Press, 1993. See also: Belinda Coote, *The Trade Trap*, Oxfam Publications, 1996.