Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rationalities for Asymmetric Conflicts
(the US versus terror case)

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Introduction

The 11 September attack *turned two of the most powerful traits* of American society – a free, open, liberal society, endowed with the best transportation system in the world – *into weaknesses*. Moreover, it meant the first *strategic blow* to the vision on the world order. The United States could not be the same after this attack. The *complex nature of the global environment* makes the groupings behind these kinds of attacks little vulnerable to traditional means of combating the enemy.

,The three things mentioned above represent the fundamental characteristics of the asymmetric conflict and three reasons for which asymmetric attack is the most effective way so far discovered to reduce the gap between the asymmetric centres of power.

The present paper will try to highlight some of the characteristics of this new type of threat, analysing the causes of its ensue, the modalities of manifestation, the classical types of asymmetric conflicts, and the main categories of asymmetric enemy.

Some of these reasons are intrinsic to the realities of the kinds of societies that spur these asymmetric attackers, while others are the consequence of the impact of American foreign policy abroad – thus extrinsic to the formation of asymmetries.

The analysis will thus equally focus on identifying the main reasons why the United States are the preponderant destination of these types of attacks. There can be alternative answers to the question as to how the 11 September attacks were possible. This paper chooses to focus on several aspects less used in traditional explanations, which often overlook such arguments when establishing the deepest causes of the extreme rise in violence against US interests in the past few years.

Equally, a reason will be sought as to how a certain inertia in adapting the US security system to the realities of the post Cold War era led to the coagulation of vulnerabilities, which further led to an accrual of the losses suffered after the attacks.

1. *The Premises of the Asymmetric War (Attack)*

11 September marked the end of a period when United States perfected their "zero casualty" approach on the conflicts, one which predicated minimum losses for itself and maximum losses for the enemy. After the terrorist attack on the WTC, president Bush had to declare war to the enemy, before knowing who that was. This new type of enemy is a mobile one, with a trans-national or sub-national character. This marked the beginning of the asymmetric conflict era.

For decades, USA spent billions of dollars to ensure minimal losses in all types of confrontations where it participated. It is said that during the Vietnam War, for each Vietnamese soldier killed, the costs were averaging to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Closer to our days, during the first Gulf War (and equally during the first part of the second), through the Power doctrine – massive bombardments from a distance – USA hoped to bring losses close to zero, inside a symmetric war. The superior weaponry and troops, supported by intelligent, last generation equipments, carried by aircrafts,

were able to guarantee such results by causing massive destructions to its opponents.

Beginning with 11 September, the asymmetric political scenario, prophesied by many American strategists years before, made its way in. The attack fell on the precise spot where the American pride could be hurt most seriously – the Pentagon and the Wall Street. The leadership in Washington, willing to adapt to an evolving, globalised world, introduced a revolution in military affairs, known as RMA.

Conceptualisations

There are *two distinct concepts* related to the understanding of the concept of asymmetric war in American view. The first is connected to the notion of *"fourth generation of war", the non-state or asymmetric war*, carried by an enemy without a state base, but backed by an ideology or a religion.

For United States, asymmetry means Osama Bin Laden and other international known terrorists, mafia organisations and drug dealers. However, the concept equally refers to non-state actors, such as those confronted with in Somalia, Kosovo or Lebanon. Those analysts that believe the future to be asymmetric propose a rethinking of the usefulness of war aircraft that costs million of dollars and of the sea bombardiers, given the reality of those circumstances that allowed two people in a boat to kill, in 2000, 17 soldiers and destroy the navy USS Cole (to give just one example).

The second concept of the military revolution materialised in *the anti-missile shield project, Star Wars*, designed to protect America from any ballistic missile that could enter its air space, carrying biological or chemical weapons. As there has been a concerted international public reaction to reintroducing proliferation policies, the Bush administration explained that this shield was not to be built against another nuclear power, but against rogue states or, worse, against non-state groups, capable to send missiles towards the American soil.

Both approaches as well as those who believe in their effectiveness seem to converge in their support for a coherent strategy to fight an asymmetric enemy. A series of questions arise: who, except Bin Laden, could be the enemy? Not the mafia and the drug dealers – open conflicts do not benefit businesses. Unless he knows precisely that United States intend to bomb one rogue state, why would a leader decide to attack America, knowing that they will be punished – as Libya or Iraq had been? To which extent did the Americans create new enemies and how dangerous are they? In which way is this kind of terrorism different from the one afflicting the Arab and some European states in the past 20 years? Is this difference qualitative or rather quantitative in nature?

Defining Asymmetry

We will begin answering these questions by trying to clarify the conceptual difference between *asymmetry* and *bi-symmetry*. The latter represents the *quantitative difference*, measured in both armament and military force, between a powerful state and a weaker one. To exemplify we can look at the recent US (and allies) versus Iraq case.

The asymmetry though, is defined as the qualitative difference between the available means, the values and the style of combat of a more powerful state, and that of its enemies. When a power such as the United States insists on its preponderance in global matters, while equally on the conventional weaponry, the disadvantaged enemies will seek the use of asymmetric non-conventional arms in battle, thus avoiding the strong points of the former and concentrating on its weaknesses.

2. A Sociological Explanation on the "why's" and "how's" of the Rise of Asymmetric Enemies

The Emergency Response and Research Institute – ERRI of the United States published, in the winter of 1999 a report in which it analysed the nature of global conflicts. The conclusions of the research indicated a general mutation inside the

classical paradigm on the way in which conflicts will occur in the future.

This mutation is more of *form* than of *substance*. At that date, the predictions made by the specialists indicated that mass violence, deaths and wounded people will continue to occur, but that these events will happen in places and ways different from what we traditionally know. This prediction turned out to be true during the 11 September events and continued to do so.

A worrisome fact is that states previously known as stable are experiencing religious, ethnic or other types of conflicts, while the numbers of separatist movements are on their way to divide countries into smaller and more ethnically concentrated areas. Some of these conflicts find their roots in ancient times and provided reasons for war for hundreds of years. Others have ignited only recently and represent the result of demographic modifications,

regime changes or mutations in the religious or ideological patterns of a certain region.

If we add to these factors the internal disruptions of political or ethnic nature, caused by vicious economic circumstances, as is the case in the regions of South-West Asia, Far East, Africa or South America, we get an explosive mixture that will certainly fill in the conflicts of the future period with the necessary discontent.

One exotic statement that was made regarding the mechanism of originating terrorist organisations affirmed that it resembled, from a functional point of view, the genesis of viruses or bacteria suffering natural mutations in time, in order to resist the effect of antibiotics and other adverse conditions. Similarly, terrorist methods suffer alterations of form through which they come to survive and project their newly acquired abilities on the weaknesses of the opposing structures[1].

Religious and Ethnic Sub-Cultures and the Formation of Asymmetric Groups

Global traditional societies contain myriads of subcultures based on ethnic, religious, cultural or ideological believes – all very strong. When more such sub-cultures interact, the newly generated sub-cultures proliferate in a manner very similar to the one in which live cells generate other live cells to the point of creating a new organism. The structural integrity of a society thus becomes ever more complex.

Most dangerous ideologies from pre-modern era are fighting to keep their dominant identity inside their own sphere of interest. Due to conflicting ideologies, many societies did not experience the coagulation of a real religious diversity. This is the reason why the concept of vertical religious and ethnic integration did not allow for a horizontal migration and a fractional polarization of the society.

The mechanism above-mentioned presents a dynamic explaining ethnic tribalism as a fractal sub-culture, fighting for inclusion based on a conflicting agenda. This situation resulted in ethnic and religious migration towards new geographic or political sites inside a society.

After centuries of continuous discrimination, colonisation and incessant manipulation of sub-

cultures, the diversity resulted in being, in many cases, restrained, while the leaders continue to rise with the help of ideologies or dangerous systems of leadership. Any perceived threat to the given ideology will be resisted against, repelled, threatened or even treated with a formal agreement, while the status quo is not changed.

In some cases, a primitive type of "pre-emptive defence" is used, with the purpose of eliminating the insubordinate fractions. In this way, the dangerous ideology is propelled from one generation of leaders to the next, while those considered unskilled or subject of contempt are manipulated, overlooked or simply ignored. This sort of marginalizing is the most oftenly-encountered reason for violence.

This could be, briefly, the mechanism through which individuals and groups of asymmetric types are formed, with all the frustrations arising from their position as under-privileged, of scorn towards certain structures inside the society. Such people and groups are rapidly propagated in the international affairs, especially given the status of global village of the present world.

3. *The Methods of Asymmetric War and the Types of Asymmetric Enemies*

The methods (weapons) most frequently used by asymmetric enemies in the attempt to gain a position of force in relation with the more powerful opponent are:

- *Threats from multiple and simultaneous sources* – there are fears that non-conventional acts of terrorism could be accompanied by electronic attacks, or attacks on the infrastructure that could cause losses to the commercial communication and information systems, military or governmental.

- *"The battle for hearts and minds"*, as it has been called – in the post Cold War era, the main opponents of US power such as Saddam Hussein, Ayatollah Khomeini, Fidel Castro or Yasser Arafat discovered that they can gain the hearts and minds of people by using psychological techniques (known by the specialists as Psy-Ops), which employ the use of selective information from the reality, disinformation, press manipulation and propaganda.

- *The psychological impact of weapons of mass destruction* – a worrying tendency signalled for the first time in the 90's indicates a mutation in the philosophy of detaining this type of weapons, from the need to deter the opponent, into using them as alternative weapons in the benefit of military powers previously considered of lesser influence or even for the use of non-state groups.

- *The effects of economic terrorism* – a new generation of terrorists, considered "enlightened", discovered recently that the way to chaos and fear among populations can be easily achieved through large scale attacks on economic targets or infrastructure, thus determining a general state of decadence of the society and creating the premises for popular civil unrest and consequent uprising.

In the light of the differentiations shown above, resulting both from the synergy of the specific elements born inside the society, as well as from the specific ways of combat, we could classify the asymmetric opponents as follows:

- *Large states in transition*. From the American perspective on the potential asymmetric opponents, this possibility is less likely to occur in the immediate future, given the difference in capabilities between the USA and the rest of the world, in what the support of a conventional conflict is concerned. Presently, the most "plausible" candidates for conflict (and even those, little probable before the end of this decade) could be China, Russia and India.

- *"Rogue" states.* There is a largely shared view among strategic analysts in the USA that states such as Iran, Syria, Iraq (until recently) or North Korea, will try to acquire nuclear or conventional equipment with long range of action, in order to become, by the end of the first decade of this millennium, a real challenge to the supremacy of the USA.

- *"Failed" states.* The local insurgencies in Somalia or Chechnya, led by local charismatic leaders, brought the American or Russian armies in embarrassing situations. With the rise in violence in the urban areas around the globe, the conflicts of the future are more likely to occur in the cities, than outside them. By hiding among a population that often shares their views, urban guerrilla seems to offer a coherent strategy of terror to US opponents.

- *Trans-national criminals.* The phenomenon of trans-national criminality has turned, for a long time already, into a global one. The potential fears related to its rise refer to the fact that some states could choose to use internal criminal networks in a symbiotic way, in order to support action that could undermine the economies of industrialised democracies, without determining any response from their behalf. The cyber space could prove to be an attractive arena for carrying strategic criminal campaigns.

- *Terrorist organisations.* Considered the most fierceful foe of US today, from the point of view of the losses produced, the terrorist organisations and networks from around the globe seem to prefer this country as their main point of focus. This indicates that future conflicts, at least in the medium term, will not entail traditional confrontations with massive troops involved, but rather limited fights with small terrorist units of fanatics, some using even non-conventional armament or other

sophisticated tactics and strategies. Such is the present situation in Iraq or Afghanistan, where, although large numbers of equipments and troops have been displayed across a large territory, the battles are being carried around limited spots and the weapons and tactics of Allies' adversaries are those foreseen by specialists.

4. *Elements in the US Foreign Policy Susceptible to Create Premises for Asymmetric Conflicts*

As stated in the beginning of this paper, a special attention will be granted to the issue of finding evidence as to how the main lines of American policy in the world determined an exacerbation of the anti-American feeling and led to developing specific forms of asymmetric combat.

For specialists from both US and outside, many of the realities of asymmetric conflict are the result of inadvertencies and inadequate adaptation of the US foreign policy to the post Cold War era. Such policy may prove to be more detrimental to inspiring order among the participants to global games than to deter enemies, while it seems prone on *raising antipathies* of the international public opinion, as well as *vulnerabilities* in constructing the American defence structure.

a. Inadequacies in adaptation and raising antagonism

Many analysts consider that the events of 11 September 2001 were not the result of an anomaly, but a predictable phase induced by the stress of changes in international environment. This could thus be explained by inertia in adapting the type of response fit for the Cold War period, not recognizing the political and institutional realities of the period after 1990.

The rivalries among great powers was a comfortable state for the political and military elites from Washington, as in this type of world the action and reaction were predictable in nature. The population of the country was made to feel safer not by adapting to the asymmetric types of threats that occurred, but by acquiring intelligent weaponry and systems, extremely sophisticated and expensive.

More recently, the letter signed by 200 professors in International and Strategic Studies from all American Universities warned president Bush on the risks induced by his foreign policy.

The Department of Defence continued to follow this policy after 1990, advancing the idea that US security depends on accumulating more arms and securing the space. This did not entail that the country need not prepare for this type of attacks, but that many political and military leaders used this argument in excess, in order to justify the preservation of a certain type of military structure, of the personnel, and armed systems and, not least, to protect the interests of the providers of defence systems and of the military bases abroad. In fact, many specialists consider that the new arms race and the ballistic missile shield do not respond to the real security needs of the state.

For years, all serious considerations on the possible threats to US mentioned the probability of terrorist attacks sponsored by states or non-state actors. In 1999 a Commission, called Hart-Rudman Commission, was set up inside the Congress and analysed this issue. The conclusions were that "for the future, massive investments in the scientific or industrial infrastructure of small states, groups, rich individuals, criminal syndicates or terrorist groups will no longer be necessary in order to get hold of dangerous technologies."[2] The Commission further proposed that "states will purchase weapons of mass destruction, and some will even use them. Most probably, Americans will die on American soil, possibly in large number."[3]

Familiar with the concept of power acquired during the Cold War and the global domination, the State Department and the Department of Defence developed the rhetoric of "rogue states" and argued that the best protection against terrorism was the anti-missile shield.

Obviously, the question that arose and that saw its material proof in the 11 September

attacks was why would terrorist organisations spend money on building such missiles, when commercial air transport was providing an equally effective means, with much cheaper navigation skills. The evidence thus proved

that the expansive and expensive super-structure of the United States was not well tailored to the new global threats and as such vulnerable to new political competitors.

The Islam Issue

Probably the most obvious element in the antipathy for US is represented by its policy towards Arab world, both in supporting Israel in the Middle East conflict, as well as in promoting a policy in the area that led to frustrations of the religious Muslim feeling.

One US decision that created unrest among the Islamic population was the sending of half a million American soldiers in Saudi Arabia in 1991. According to official documents of the US Army, "the Saudi kingdom requested emergency assistance from United States, in order to offer protection against ballistic missiles threat on their country. The US Army responded immediately by deploying two artillery battalions for defence from Europe, with a leading brigade."[4] The 7000 soldiers were expected to remain only temporarily on the Saudi territory, but ten years later, at the moment of the attack on WTC, they were still there. Their presence gave room to vivid discussions in a population highly sensitive about Islamic culture and religious purity, as well as national sovereignty.

While press and strategists were raising question marks on the pertinence of deploying 3000 American soldiers in Bosnia, a similar question was not asked about stationing troops in Saudi Arabia. When asked whether question marks should exist about a military presence eroding the legitimacy of Saudi leaders in the eyes of their population and radicalising Islamic fundamental views against United States, the pervasive answer of American administration remained that American troops were helping stabilise the region and protect it from a possible Iraqi attack.

Analysts often commented that the degree of Soviet subordination of the culture and

identity of the peoples found under its sphere of influence led to the radicalisation of the population in these areas. Asked whether the same phenomenon could be encountered in the countries under American influence, as, for instance, Japan or Saudi Arabia, the former deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott answered that the American troops are stationed abroad as "stability anchors" and not as coercion forces. The reality seems though to show that America still needs to provide a *raison d'être* for its troops, as a total pull out would have been difficult to achieve at the end of the Cold War. Besides, the outstanding conflict in Iraq brings new elements to support on-going presence in this part of the world.

In spite of its status of international pariah, the words of Osama Bin Laden are providing useful information on the perceived power of the United States abroad and so are being carefully analysed by experts to understand the view of the radical and extremist movements. Many of the influential elites of the United Arab Emirates, Oman or Kuwait – all of them states found under US protection – share his opinions. In his book "Holy War Inc.", Peter Bergen quotes Bin Laden as saying: "The collapse of Soviet Union made United States more arrogant, regarding itself as the master of the world and to establish what they call the new world order. United States created today a double standard, naming anyone who dared raising against its injustice a terrorist. They wish to occupy our countries, to steel our resources, and impose their agents to lead us...and want us to agree with all that."[5] This opinion seems to be shared by many leaders of developing nations and, to a certain degree, by some leaders of the developed nations (to exemplify, see the recent discontent over the Iraq intervention issue inside the United Nations).

The Israel Lesson

Before analysing the other component of the asymmetry of conflicts between US and its adversaries, we will dwell for a brief while on another extremely sensitive issue related to the roots of the anti-American feeling, namely the Israel problem. Given its unconditional support for Israel policy in the Middle East, as well as adopting specific attitudes in its relation with potential foes, United States tends to attract the same type of reaction as Israel does from the part of Arab countries.

Most writings in the literature on asymmetric conflicts concentrate on United States and, since the outburst of the second Intifada, on Israel as well. The two states worked closely together in some programs such as developing anti-ballistic missiles "Arrow". The Israeli fighting style, especially in West Bank and Gaza strip presents great interest for the American specialists, who detected asymmetric elements in the wars carried by Israel.

In a book called "How to Fight an Asymmetric War"[6], general Wesley Clark, the commander of NATO forces in Kosovo, explains the way Palestinians in Israel learnt to resist using non-lethal means. They use a tactic meant to exploit world sensitivities, forcing Israeli troops to overreact. On certain occasions, they used armed people placed in the middle of the stone-throwing crowd to reinforce the non-lethal forces, or even terrorist bombings. To answer with fighting planes, tanks or artillery in such situations was impossible. To answer with infantry posed too many risks. No society is more cautious than Israel to accept losses, which pushed the country to develop new equipments, new forces and new types of tactics. In order to defend its borders, Israel deployed more tanks and transportation vehicles for troops, acquired Apache helicopters, ground-guided aircraft and high fidelity optical devices. In order to protect itself internally, Israel produced plastic bullets for infantry, as well as riot-control equipment. Special security troops have been trained to ease the work of the conventional units in charge with maintaining order.

Although it may seem extremely convincing, the ability developed by Israel in the fight with the asymmetric enemies has its own perverse effects that led, as could be noted, to the proliferation of violence and the creation of a vicious circle, difficult to overcome at this point in time.

This only contributed to providing extremist Islamic groups with yet another reason as to why the strong support given by the US to the policy of this country makes the former extremely unpopular among the Muslim population from the Middle East. Experts appreciate that since the beginning of the application of this approach on asymmetric conflict, nearly 2000 Palestinians have been killed and thousands wounded (in the period 29 September 2000, beginning of Intifada and 15 September 2004)*. In the absence of a political or diplomatic option, force did not manage to improve security.

Analysts of the International and Strategic Studies in Washington suggest that Israel forced the Palestinian Authority to oppress its population and reduce democratic liberties in order to maintain stability. When the Intifada continued, Palestinians found themselves in front of two options: peace with violence or war.

b. Vulnerabilities

Many analysts consider that the most important impact of 11 September was felt on *America's perception of itself and its role around the globe.* What the terrorists from WTC managed to do was to put an end to the geo-strategic advantage the United States had before. Separated by the rest of the world through two large oceans and blessed by neighbours such as Mexico and Canada, the US territory remained for centuries untouchable by external threats.

Few great powers in the history benefited from such geographical circumstances. They had to live with their chick next to the jaw of an aggressive neighbour, having its own ambitions as great power.

United States found themselves under attack only during the Pearl Harbour episode, in 1942, but Hawaii was thousands of kilometres away from the mainland. Last time when this needed defence was in 1812, when Great Britain plundered Washington D.C. The luxury of a secure internal space ended for US on 11 September, when events turned them, from this point of view, into a normal power that had to defend its territory.

The new conditions of domestic vulnerability had two profound effects on US: one on the external plan, the other on the internal plan. *Externally*, the debate between isolationism and internationalism – a recurring feature of American policy – is now belonging to the past. USA do not have an option whether to behave as a solitary citadel on the top of the mountain, immune to the dynamic of international politics. *Internally*, US benefited from the existence of the most vivid civil society. Without threats inside their frontiers and with an immigration culture, US could afford to encourage manifestations of liberty and welcoming attitudes towards coming from outside. The only recent exception to that was the McCarthy period in the 50's, when US had to adopt previously unacceptable practices in order to solve their communist problem at home.

Presently, the Bush administration imposed drastic measures to answer the threats to internal security coming through immigration. For the first time, America is confronting the *dilemma* that other democracies had to face long before, that of *keeping the balance between the imperatives of constitutional liberties and the operational necessity of ensuring internal security.* "Unorthodox" methods or prevention and warning have been adopted, which were considered unacceptable or unconceivable before 11 September. For example, less than one week after the WTC events, the American Congress raised the interdiction to assassinate foreign leaders, making room in this way to a potential new wave of violence.

On a military level, the US is exploring doctrines that go beyond the concept of defence, in order to postulate the necessity of a *preventive* policy or even of a *pre-emptive* one, in order to be able to answer those elements that cannot be withhold otherwise. Such measures have been already applied to Saddam Hussein at the beginning of the present Iraqi conflict.

Moreover, as US itself admit, even the united forces of the great powers will not be able to oppose successfully its combating capacities in the foreseeable future. There was little step from this acknowledgement to the idea that US could use this huge advantage of power *to pursue its interests unilaterally*, without consulting or cooperating with other major powers in order to maintain world peace and security in the new millennium, which could be experienced during the recent debates on the Iraq intervention.

The Bush administration equally restored the idea that it is the duty of Washington to make sure that a *new potential competitor* or a combination of such, that would question American supremacy, was not possible.

In what economic vulnerability is concerned, this has already been felt during the 80's, before the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the costs of maintaining the army already caused economic and politic discomfort. In addition, these costs did not exclusively represent the counter-price for people and weapons, but equally the special terms of commerce offered by US to its allies in Europe and Asia in order to maintain its military personnel. A notorious example is the case when Japan and US closed a deal, in which the latter offered preferential and unlimited access to American markets, in exchange for American troops stationed on the territory of the former. From its very beginning, the deal was not concluded on the principles of a free market economy, but on the pragmatic needs of US to protect its assets from an eventual Soviet expansion.

Around the year 1985, US have already become the greatest debtor of the world, while Japan was the main global creditor. Under political pressure, the Reagan administration had to invent a whole mechanism of financial manipulation in order to oblige the dollar to depreciate with 50% in relation to the yen, in

order to give a new impetus to the American economy. The intervention on the exchange rate pushed the trade balance of the US created the premises for a massive wave of Japanese investments in the American economy that doubled their value. When the ground under the presidential palace in Tokyo became more valuable than the state of California, it became obvious that the markets were not functioning correctly. The earth shaking events of September 1985 foresaw the end of the Cold War, as the costs of maintaining its might were becoming politically and economically unsustainable.

During the same Cold War, US and USSR forced the world to choose on whose side to play. They conceived a spiral of commerce, aid, military presence and diplomacy in order to keep different nations in their spheres of influence. After the disentanglement of the Soviet Union, the cost-benefit balances of the countries found in the American sphere of influence changed dramatically. In the lack of Soviet threat, the wish of US to absorb the

costs for keeping its own influence alive modified, and question marks started to arise on the pertinence of world economic system established by the US itself after the end of the Second World War. Many analysts consider the Asian crisis more a result of imposing neo-liberal mechanisms of the Bretton Woods types of organisations on countries found under development, which were not ready to accept them. Few believe that this was due to the incapacity of these countries to govern or to the primitive type of capitalism they were promoting in economic relations.

These are some of the arguments to show that the external policy of the US immediately after the end of the Cold War, characterised by a certain inertia in action and a structure tailored to the challenges specific to those times, led both to raising antipathies, as well as to a dwindling of the power structure in the US, by inadequate adaptation to outside conditions, which led to a raise in the risk of exposure to various threats.

5. *Types of Asymmetric Threats*

In accordance to the types of vulnerabilities signalled in the American structure of power as explained above, we may identify a classification of the types of asymmetric responses that were given or could be given to US by its enemies:

- acquiring weapons of mass destruction:
- selective purchasing of sensors, hi-fi military communications and systems (strategy knows as the "niche player strategy"

– avoiding direct confrontation by raising the costs of a conventional intervention[7])

- exploiting cybernetic weapons;
- choosing as war theatre the city or the jungle in order to degrade the enemy's capacity to seek and find significant military targets;
- economic strategic war against the economic private interests of US citizens.

The Strategy of Fighting Without Rules

The Pentagon affirms that the new enemies are not fighting with honest means; their strategy, based on the global world, uses all the sophisticated modern means: of communication, transport, information, psychological terror, international mass-media and the Internet. Their arsenal equally includes knives, fishing boats, homemade explosives or civil airplanes. As it could be seen, they work. And even if these enemies have to have a base somewhere, no permanent location could be associated with their name, as they do not

have a home, and the networks are dispersed. The worldwide is their address, as well as the operational area.

The asymmetric enemies have a common interest: weakening the sovereignty and strengthening the forces on the international markets. From this point of view, they are said to resemble McDonalds, CNN or AOL. They all are speculating the grey areas of the global world, the shortcomings of the legal systems in order to maximise their profits and escape

the accounting of their activities by constitutional or democratic powers.

In this sense, we may say that the asymmetric actors are creations of the neo-liberal version of the globalisation. They have a space of manoeuvre larger than the one of the states. This is why newspapers described Osama Bin Laden not only as an Islamic politician, with roots in a certain type of society, but also as a representative of a new, cosmopolite Islam, posing a threat to the whole world (similar to the Islamic movement led by Hassan al-Turabi, now in a prison in Sudan).

By the methods used, similar to McVeigh from Oklahoma City in 1995, Bin Laden used the information revolution in his own advantage. They both have realised that the little can generate gigantic effects and the powerful are often oblivious to the possibilities of the small.

By Way of Conclusion

We can thus see that the strategies against the new type of enemy – the asymmetric one – concentrated on the need of developing new weapons, with maximum power to kill. Intelligence services have been strengthened with surveillance software, spy satellites, but also with human spies. In the typical police work, racial profiling is now recommended. Strategists wish to be able to extend spying to the potential sources of support of their foes, hereby including the NGO's, charities, ex-pat communities, and Internet sites. In one intervention in the Congress, a Senator complained that CIA replaced the State Department in the American diplomacy[8].

From various points of view, it may appear that the Bush Administration inclines towards an approach for the asymmetric threat similar to the Israeli model. The consequences could be serious.

The grey zones of the planet, created after war, globalisation and poverty are areas with a high potential of danger. Public institutions and development are more necessary to these grey areas than military interventions.

The events of 11 September reflect a transformation of the world that we need to understand deeply. The answer so far offered by America reflects a strategy of imposing an international security system built and implemented in its own favour.

The victories recorded by US so far in the war against its asymmetric adversaries could foster a type of situation – as happened after the first Gulf War: a radicalisation of the Islamic extremist groups. The new asymmetric enemy will not be defended by force, in the lack of an adequate political project, able to accommodate the specific needs of those populations that are generating such kinds of anomalies.

NOTE

[1] Clark L. Staten, "The Evolution and Devolution of Terrorism; The Coming Challenge For Emergency and National Security Forces", published in *Journal of Counterterrorism and Security International*, winter, 1999, page 27.

[2] "Road Map for National Security. Imperative for change", conclusions of the Hart Rudman Congress Commission, January 2001, page 78

[3] "New World Coming – American Security in the 21 century", Publications of Congress, Washington DC, 1999, page 243

[4] "Official History of the Third US Army", citat de Steven Clemons în "United States: all-powerful but powerless", apărut în *Le Monde Diplomatique*, octombrie 2001

[5] Peter Bergen, "Holy War Inc", Rockefeller Center, New York, 2002, page 233

[6] Wesley Clark "How to Fight an Asymmetric War", *Time Magazine*, october 2000, page 37

[*] Estimations differ from nearly 3000 according to Palestinian sources, to nearly 2000 according to Israeli sources

[7] "Asymmetric Threats" in „Engaging power for peace", *Strategic Assessment 1998*, National Defense University, Washington DC

[8] "An enemy with no forwarding address", Marwan Bishara, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 2001

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