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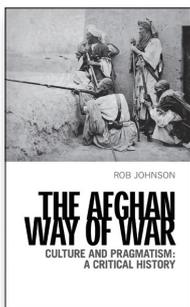
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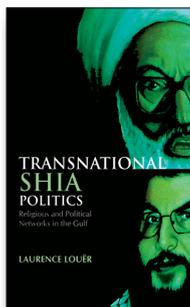
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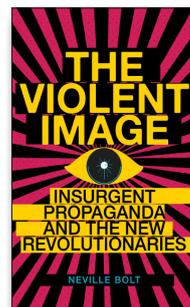
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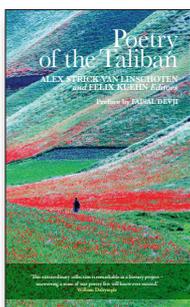
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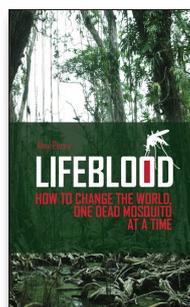
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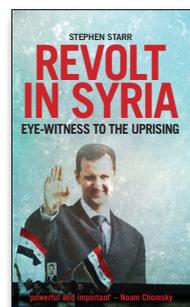
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BANKING LOOPHOLES BETWEEN WEST AFRICA AND HONG KONG

by Kit Dawnay

THE ROLE of West African states Gambia and Guinea Bissau in a Hong Kong investment scheme raises some interesting questions about China's links with Africa. The ties came to light when David Webb, an activist investor in Hong Kong, sought figures on the Special Administrative Region's Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (CIES), a measure which requires mainlanders to have permanent residency overseas in order to obtain residency for investment purposes in Hong Kong. Webb published the figures, which date from February 2012, showing that Gambia and Guinea Bissau were the official residencies for 75.1% of the 11,585 mainland Chinese now in Hong Kong under the CIES. Gambia alone accounted for 57.3% of successful mainland applicants, Guinea Bissau for 17.8%, with Canada accounting for 8.8%, and Niger for 2.5%. Intriguingly, many of the 50,000 mainland Chinese in neighbouring Macau under its now-suspended property investment scheme also had residency in Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Niger.

The numbers highlight these states' importance as providers of "economic citizenship" packages to Chinese citizens abroad, offering rich mainlanders a means to move assets offshore. This type of service is not new - St Kitts and Nevis has sold passports since 1984 - but Gambia is a recent entrant to the market. Its appeal may be ease; some providers state that they can secure residency for clients in less than one month. Another attraction to mainland Chinese, though, may be Banjul's recognition of Taiwan rather than mainland China, limiting Beijing's ability to directly influence the government in Gambia.

The risks are manifold. Gambia and Guinea Bissau raise a wide range of money laundering concerns. The Gambian political system is opaque, authoritarian and arbitrary. President Jammeh has a reputation for brutality. In 2009 he forced 1,000 suspected witches to ingest poisonous concoctions. Political opponents routinely disappear. Gambia also played a key, if quiet, role in the illicit diamond and arms trades which fuelled the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the 1990s, and may still be active in exporting arms to Guinea Bissau and Senegal's Casamance region. Indeed, the 2010 seizure in Nigeria of Iranian weapons destined for Banjul prompted Dakar to voice fears of Gambian involvement in Casamance. Gambia is also an important link in the cocaine trade passing through West Africa into Europe, and is hugely overbanked - it boasts 14 banks serving just 1.7 million people. Needless to say, Gambia's money laundering standards are questionable. In 2011, the US Treasury has imposed sanctions on Prime Bank Gambia, a subsidiary of Lebanese Canadian Bank, under Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act for fund-raising for Hezbollah. Nigerian officials also privately raise doubts about Gambian standards.

Guinea Bissau has an even worse reputation. The country, geographically separated from Gambia only by the turbulent Casamance region, has by all accounts become a "narco-state". Cocaine shipments come into the country routinely by air and sea. The value of drug imports dwarfs the country's GDP, facilitating graft, although some analysts have seen a decline in trade since 2008. Guinea Bissau is also politically unstable, with recent events including the assassination of the president by soldiers in 2009, military unrest in 2010, an attempted coup in 2011, and a (seemingly) effective coup in April 2012. Much of this instability derives from efforts to monopolise drug revenues. Interestingly, though, Guinea-Bissau has a tiny and weak banking system, meaning cash smuggling out of the country is rife, which may in turn account for Gambia's overbanked sector as well as Dakar's property boom.

There has been little actual indication that Chinese individuals who purchase residency in Gambia or Guinea Bissau visit either country or make use of their financial sectors. Indeed, any putative links between Hong Kong and the West African cocaine trade may be circumstantial and contextual, having more to do with China's presence in Africa than revealing a criminal foray into new markets. However, Gambia and Guinea Bissau's economic citizenship services still present risks for Hong Kong and Macau, and for China. President Jammeh, for example, maintains good relations with North Korea, which has historically maintained trading and financial links with Macau. More generally, the system may facilitate capital flight from China, perhaps by making it easier to disguise the proceeds of corruption, a concern for a Beijing keen to control its capital account. Accordingly, governments in Hong Kong and China, and the financial sector in general, need to ensure that this loophole does not evolve into something more than an intriguing footnote in the history of Beijing's ties to Africa. Better that, than wait for a scandal.

Kit Dawnay is an analyst of international relations, politics and economics. He has worked as a journalist, for the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, and for a defence services company analysing economic crime. He has degrees in law and history, and an MPhil in international relations from Cambridge University. He lives in Hong Kong.

RACIAL CONFLICT IN MALI

by Hannah Armstrong

IN A POPULAR BLOG entitled *Africa Is A Country*, Gregory Mann, Associate Professor at Columbia University, recently repeated a familiar narrative depicting the Tuareg rebellion in Mali in racial terms. It referred to 'white Tuaregs' betrayed by French colonisers ('other Whites') who 'had left them to be ruled by the Blacks' and who are once more waging war against a black Malian state. 'The politics is rancid,' opined Mann, an historian of francophone West Africa.¹

Media accounts commonly allude to the grievances underlying Mali's 'Tuareg problem' in racial terms. Southern blacks who control the capital Bamako feel aggrieved by northern whites for their historically ruthless slave-raids and nomadic lifestyle. Northern whites resent having to beg for development aid from southern blacks they perceive to be inferior or foreign. Even the outside parties both sides rely on for help suggest bias of one sort or another: Tuaregs look to Algeria and Libya in North Africa, while Bamako receives support from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union.

There is a danger in uncritical acceptance of such assumptions about the Tuareg rebellion. 'We should not understand this as a product of essentially ethnic factors,' says anthropologist Dr. Naffet Keita, the first southern Malian to defend a thesis on the Tuaregs. The Ifoghas, he outlines, were a subjugated Tuareg tribe first empowered by the French, which allied with them against the more warlike, anti-colonial Tuareg of Menaka. The Ifoghas have headed Tuareg rebellions since Malian Independence, with the state indirectly empowering them during peace accords by buying their submission with key posts in Bamako and the North. Having gained choice appointments over the course of the rebellions, Keita says, 'the Ifoghas have started to assert their supremacy over other Tuareg communities.' Many Tuareg factions do not support the current rebellion, which has touched off a refugee crisis of epic proportions (320,000 displaced, according to UN figures). Ifoghas leaders head up the rebels as well as the Salafist group that is violently imposing Sharia law in the occupied North, which they claim to have liberated.

Ibrahim Ag Idbaltanat, the head of the Malian anti-slavery NGO Tamedt, sees the struggle between slaves and masters - then and now - in class rather than ethnic terms. 'We did a study in Mali to show that slavery is not unique to the North, to [whiter] Tuaregs and to Moors - this study showed that slavery persists in the North and in the South. In Bamako, Mopti, Kaye and Segou, we found cases [of black slave-owners].'

There is no doubt that the conflict manifests ethnic and racial symptoms. Many lighter-skinned Tuaregs and Arabs fled Bamako after their homes were singled out for looting, while darker-skinned populations including former slaves in the North fled or were chased out by Tuareg rebels in the fighting over the past few months. People are sensitive to ethnic difference and precolonial legacies of subordination of black Africans by other black Africans, commonly made explicit and joked over in everyday life in the capital. It is not unusual, for example, for one man to say 'You're my slave!' in jest, upon meeting another whose surname suggests past subjugation.

Racial interpretations of the Tuareg rebellion propagate primordialist stereotypes of Africans, and obscure unique historical dimensions of the conflict's origins. It muddies the waters where clarity is needed in the search for lasting solutions. The ideal of a unified, ethnically diverse and indivisible Mali holds special appeal for populations in both North and South. I have heard illiterate nomads voice reluctance to draw new national borders in an age made distinct by the speeding obsolescence of frontiers. One anti-rebellion Tuareg businessman, awed by the size of China's market, remarked: 'Mali already is so economically insignificant it can scarcely be said to represent a market. What happens when we start dividing it up?'

NOTES

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Hannah Armstrong is a Sahel-based Fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs (www.icwa.org). A recent graduate of London's School of Oriental and African Studies with an M.A. Distinction in International Studies and Diplomacy, Hannah previously worked as a freelance foreign correspondent, reporting on politics, economic development, and security from Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, and Haiti. Her work has appeared in the *Financial Times*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Monocle*, among others. She can be found on Twitter at @HannahHaniya.

THE RETURN OF COTE D'IVOIRE

by John James

IVORIANS, EVER PROUD of their French colonial ties, aren't normally quick to speak English. But the words 'Cote d'Ivoire is back' are regularly heard and published in the bustling economic capital Abidjan, a sentiment apparently better expressed in the language of Shakespeare. A drive through the broad avenues of what is one of Africa's more glamorous cities yields few pointers to the post-election crisis that tore apart the country's just-healed political process last year. Do appearances deceive or is the former West African economic miracle truly back on track?

On the regional stage, the country is quickly making its voice heard again. In February, less than a year after taking office, President Alassane Ouattara became chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). As a close ally of the outgoing chairman, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, Ouattara was in some ways the obvious choice to lead the regional bloc. But an Ivorian head of state has never held the post and locally people murmured that national reconstruction work meant he wouldn't have the time. Ouattara, a former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has nonetheless quickly set to work, and perhaps inspired by last year's crisis, has pushed ECOWAS into a more interventionist role, trying to deal with coup d'états in Mali and Guinea Bissau in March and April respectively.

The diplomatic meetings have given new life to the hotel sector and occupancy rates at Abidjan's principal business hotels are around 80%. The city's landmark Hotel Ivoire has half-reopened, and will be fully refurbished and in the hands of Sofitel by next year. Azalai, Onomo, Teylieum and Kempinski hotels have all started work on brand new hotel complexes. On the infrastructure front, work has finally got underway on a new US\$325 million bridge over the lagoon that dominates Abidjan's topography. Roads are being resurfaced, and the airport is being upgraded. The major mobile phone networks, Orange, MTN and Moov have been issued with 3G licences and the new services should be operational in the next few months. Refurbishment work has started on the headquarters of the African Development Bank and diplomatic staff are moving back. In May the UK's embassy reopened after being shuttered for seven years, and an Ivoro-British chamber of commerce will be set up in the coming weeks. The bounce back this year will look impressive, with growth of around eight per cent expected, before dropping back to just over five per cent in 2013.

While things are looking up for the Ivorian economy, some investors are still waiting for a bit more post-crisis water to pass under the bridge. So the rest of 2012 will be crucial for establishing a foundation for future growth. Politically, the dust is still settling after the instability of 2010-2011, and both the demobilisation process and the political strategy chosen by the opposition, whose principal leader Laurent Gbagbo, is awaiting trial at the International Criminal Court, will be important. The government is making the right noises about improving the business climate, but for the time being it is almost out of funds to invest, ahead of the IMF's expected HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) completion point, expected to bring substantial debt relief at the end of June.

Reconciliation remains a major challenge. Some high level Ivorian business leaders fear the president may have overestimated the impact an improving economy would have on the reconciliation process. Regardless, households are still recovering from last year's crisis, insecurity in the poorer suburbs and the affect of high global food prices, making life difficult for normal Ivorian households. The heavily-mediatised Truth, Reconciliation and Dialogue Commission appears to have very little dynamism and public hearings remain a long way off. Things aren't helped by the fact that many pro-Gbagbo supporters continue to insist that he won the 2010 election, while also making his release from the ICC a condition of talks (something the new government couldn't obtain even if it wanted to).

Bearing this in mind though, the most probable outcomes look rosy for Cote d'Ivoire: it's well situated in the region, with a good inheritance of infrastructure from the spectacular growth of the 1960s and 1970s. It has reliable electricity supplies, improved economic management and a reasonably diversified economy, with potential for expansion in hydrocarbons and mining, among other areas. That should be good news for the region, particularly in the francophone West African monetary zone, which Cote d'Ivoire's economy dominates. Landlocked Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger should all benefit from the growth, and stronger trade with neighbouring Ghana should lift the entire zone.

John James is the BBC Correspondent in Cote d'Ivoire, where he's been based for nearly five years. Before that he reported from Brazzaville, which followed several years as a journalist in the UK. He has an M.Sc. in African Studies from St Antony's college, Oxford University. He blogs at drogbascountry.com and tweets at [@ourmaninafrica](https://twitter.com/ourmaninafrica).

AN INDUSTRY BASED APPROACH TO MARITIME SECURITY

by N.R. Jenzen-Jones

THE SHARP RISE in piracy in West Africa, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea, has featured prominently in recent news. Piracy as a whole is costing global trade an estimated US\$12 billion a year, with the primary target being the oil industry¹ - a key sector of the West African economy - which threatens the strategic interests of the United States,² European Union (EU),³ and China.⁴ When considering how best to counter this nascent pirate threat, capacity building operations conducted by private security companies could provide a robust, enduring solution. Such operations would also complement, rather than compete with, existing strategies being put into place by local governments, foreign governments, and private industry.

There are other issues, along with piracy, that are prevalent in the Gulf of Guinea. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the waters of West Africa has been referred to as the 'worst in the world', with London-based MRAG Limited estimating illegal catches to be 40% higher than reported legal catches.⁵ Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to lose approximately US\$1 billion dollars each year to IUU fishing. The smuggling of people, arms, and narcotics is also a significant issue in the West African maritime domain. West African states have emerged as transshipment points for cocaine exported from South America and heroin exported from Afghanistan, due to their proximity to southern Europe. In 2009, and estimated 20 to 40 tons of cocaine, and an estimated 40 to 45 tons of heroin were trafficked through Africa as a whole.⁶ Illicit shipments of small arms are also a significant problem in the Gulf of Guinea. On top of these issues, a plethora of local and transnational criminal and terrorist organisations are connected either directly or tangentially to piracy in the region. Chief amongst them are Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Hamas, Hezbollah, Boko Haram, and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).^{7,8}

The Atlantic Council's November 2010 report *Security and Stability in the West African Maritime Domain* highlights the role maritime security issues play in determining the region's overall level of stability. 'Central to West Africa's high levels of insecurity and instability,' the report notes, 'is the criminal exploitation of its expansive, largely ungoverned maritime domain.' In particular, the security of the West African maritime domain is key in ensuring:

- The unimpeded flow of oil from the Gulf of Guinea and the security of energy related infrastructure and assets;
- The safe and efficient flow of vessels, cargo, and people bound to or from foreign ports;
- The absence of a safe haven for transnational terrorist and criminal organisations;
- Political development, sustainable economic growth, and enduring stability in the region as a deterrent to state failure, humanitarian crisis, human rights abuses, and violent extremism.⁹

The convergence of so many security threats within West Africa, and particularly in the maritime realm, requires a multi-faceted, long-term approach. To counter these threats, capacity building operations conducted by private security companies could provide a robust, enduring solution. Such operations would complement, rather than compete with, existing strategies implemented by local governments, foreign governments, and private industry.

Piracy in West Africa has been on the rise since mid-2009,¹⁰ and spiked sharply over the course of 2011.¹¹ The UN Security Council voiced its concern over the increase, noting an intention to deploy a United Nations assessment team to the region to 'examine the situation and explore possible options for United Nations support.'¹² Some analysts have pointed to the widely publicised success of Somali pirates, and suggested this has directly influenced pirates in the Gulf of Guinea.¹³ However, reports have indicated that attacks in West African waters have also tended to be more violent than those off the Horn of Africa,¹⁴ and that many robberies likely go unreported due to the high frequency of illegal oil bunkering in the Niger Delta.¹⁵ The recent increase in frequency and severity of attacks prompted the Lloyd's Market Association Joint War Committee to raise the threat level of Nigeria, Benin, and neighbouring waters to the same category as the waters off the Horn of Africa.¹⁶

On the other side of the continent, naval forces from around the globe have been deployed to the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa in order to deter pirates and protect international shipping from attacks. While these programs have generated admirable results, there are some notable shortcomings. The number of merchant ships requiring protection vastly outnumbers the available protection assets deployed in theatre; there exists a simple problem – these warships cannot be everywhere they are required at once. Against an asymmetric threat such as piracy, deploying warships in large enough numbers to counter all pirate vessels is prohibitively expensive. For example, the cost of the US counter-piracy operation, represented predominantly by the presence of US Navy assets in Combined Task Force 151 and in NATO's Operation Ocean Shield, is approximately US\$64 million per year.¹⁷ The costs to other nations, NATO and EU member states, the EU, China, India must also be considered. Even in light of recent EU Naval Force Somalia (EUNAVFOR)

strikes on land-based pirate positions, such expenditure seems excessive in relation to the results achieved.

The role and success of private security companies in protecting ships at sea has been well documented.¹⁹ The value of well-trained, appropriately employed armed contractors cannot be understated; such guard forces are now provided by a number of companies, and can provide a significant deterrent and defence capability to ships' Masters. Moreover, such an embarked guard force can provide a high level of protection, available at all times, for a reasonable economic outlay. Armed guards do occasionally run into trouble, however.²⁰ At least 120 companies worldwide are now providing armed guards for merchant shipping vessels.²¹

One model that has shown a promising cost-benefit ratio is capacity building operations. The case of Triton International Ltd is illustrative. Since 2009, the company has been involved with developing and implementing both training and operations plans for the Somaliland Coastguard, providing the region of 3.5 million people with a broad spectrum maritime capability, unique within Somalia. To this end, Triton developed a 12-week basic training course for the Coastguard, as well as specialised modules on tactical maritime operations, maritime law, and vessel maintenance. Based out of the ISPS Code-compliant port of Berbera,²² the Somaliland Coastguard, which operates small, fast patrol boats equipped with deck-mounted heavy machine guns, has delivered significant security progress with limited funding and materiel.²³

There have been several measures of success. First, in 2010 alone, the Triton-trained Somaliland Coastguard captured, prosecuted, and jailed more than 120 pirates. Officials in Somaliland have said that pirates rarely cross into their waters from renowned pirate havens in the region due to the Coastguard's reputation for intercepting them.²⁴ Second, as a result of these measures, the World Food Program considers Berbera a safe port for the delivery and distribution of food aid destined for the region. Finally, the Coastguard has also intercepted vessels intending to conduct IUU fishing.²⁵

The Triton model is cost-effective and efficient, serving as a good example of an 'expandable platform'.²⁶ The Somaliland Coastguard model could provide some of the smaller, under-patrolled nations in the Gulf of Guinea with the capability to begin countering maritime threats in the region. Many of these smaller nations in need of maritime security assistance have short coastlines, and would require only minimal investment to establish a relatively effective patrol force. For example, Togo's coastline is a mere 56km long, Benin's 121km, and Liberia's 579km. By comparison, Somaliland has a 740km coastline. Capacity building programs can also gain access to areas – namely the littoral and coastal zones – where foreign defence assets may not otherwise be welcome. By partnering with the host nations or communities in areas of concern, the international community is able to increase its awareness of the threats at hand, and to determine how best to respond to these. Funding sources for such a program could be diverse, ranging from local governments or foreign governments, to shipping companies, international bodies, NGOs, or cultural diasporas.

Private industry is in a unique position to deliver such programs at reasonable cost, and without placing further demand on the already-strained naval assets of many nations with strategic interests in West Africa (particularly the US). Such capacity building models have distinct national security benefits for foreign powers; the deployment of naval assets required to secure maritime traffic and key infrastructure is often expensive and inefficient. Capacity building models allow for the development of increased maritime security capabilities that are essential for the protection of local and foreign interests. This is especially true when considering the threat to energy security from criminal and terrorist groups – some of them local and some of them transnational – operating in the Gulf of Guinea.²⁷

Capacity building programs represent a very real, scalable approach to countering the numerous maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea. Challenges certainly exist, but similar challenges in other regions have been mitigated cost-effectively through an industry-based approach. Such programs are eminently compatible with existing strategies of foreign government-led capacity building, such as the United States' Africa Partnership Station (APS) program,²⁸ with local initiatives to bolster maritime security forces, and with the existing private sector practice of deploying armed guards on merchant vessels. Such complementary, broad-spectrum strategies provide the region with interconnected, comprehensive and cost-effective layers of security.

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THINKING GLOBALLY: COUNTERING PIRACY IN WEST AFRICA

by Jessica Lincoln

MUCH has been written about the rise of piracy in West Africa. The nexus of criminality, drug trafficking, weapons proliferation and state weakness frames our understanding and perceptions of the region. Maritime companies release updates of pirate attacks and suggested modus operandi of criminal operators. and their picture of West African piracy is bleak, incorporating illegal bunkering, corruption, armed violence and hijacking. At least 33 attacks were reported in April and March 2012, and the hijacking of the BW Rhine in April 2012 underscored the very real threat to the shipping industry. Given the importance of the region – it is expected to provide the US with about one quarter of its crude imports by 2015 -- few solutions have been advanced to address this growing problem. There is a general consensus, mirroring Somalia, that the solution lies on land and that regional cooperation is pivotal. This essay explores the challenges of countering piracy in West Africa. It examines piracy within a wider economic and security dynamic, focusing on the regional oil industry in particular. The article will also look to the international response to piracy in East Africa, while has been narrowly focused on regional concerns while negating maritime safety and security in West Africa.

During a press briefing at the February 2012 London Conference on Somalia in a UK Government spokesperson respectfully dismissed a question about the need to consider piracy in West Africa while attention was likewise focused on 'doing something' about piracy in Somalia. This would appear to be a logical extension to countering piracy globally. The question remained hanging: why, when piracy represents both a significant economic and security threat to global shipping, would such a narrow regional approach be adopted? The official at the London conference was correct (if somewhat obvious) in his reply that the conference focus was on Somalia, not West Africa. But there is little doubt that Somali pirate tactics are being replicated, with reports of skiffs and motherships being used to attack vessels and attacks happening further out to sea in West Africa. It is worth considering whether East African counter piracy tactics can be employed to the same affect in West Africa, or whether a completely new approach might be required.

International Efforts

There are various multi-national counter-piracy deployments in the Gulf of Aden/Western Indian Ocean. EUNAVFOR has Operation Atalanta, NATO has Operation Ocean Shield and Combined Maritime Task Force 151, and there are many independently deployed naval vessels helping to patrol the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor. These multinational efforts exist alongside a burgeoning private sector trade in armed maritime security. Private security fulfils an obvious need, as the area of operation is almost 2,000,000 square nautical miles and therefore beyond the capacity of national and multinational maritime assets patrolling the region. The expansion of EUNAVFOR's mandate to attack and disrupt pirate bases on shore demonstrates a recognition that the problem is as much terrestrial as it is maritime. Yet this move has been met with criticism and speculation that such efforts will add fuel to the fire of terrorist/militants sympathisers and indirect targeting of civilians. It is too early to prejudge either but there is little argument that appearing to 'do something' about Somalia is firmly on the foreign policy agenda for many states, and piracy has helped focus attention on this.

The huge impact on shipping and potential haven for terrorist activities have driven this agenda but similarly, the recent oil and gas discoveries and potential this offers, require security to be established before such economic gains can be fully realised. Many companies continue exploration despite the vulnerabilities posed; highlighting that commerce is possible in Somalia but happens within an adroit and idiosyncratic local political framework. For Somalia, piracy has a firm hold on the economics of many individuals, communities and locales. It is unlikely that we will see an eradication of pirate activity until viable and credible economic alternatives present themselves. The geostrategic location of Somalia also ensures that it will remain one of the busiest shipping transit routes in the world; thus offering potentially enormous returns to those with the capacity and willing. The nascent private armed security element adds a violent factor to piracy but it is unlikely to be a complete deterrent.

For West Africa, international counter-piracy assistance has been provided in the form of training, equipment and advisors. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has had a lengthy presence in the region to disrupt drug smuggling through Africa to Europe from South America. But no similar international anti-piracy missions yet exist in West Africa as they do in the waters off East Africa. Piracy has a different focus here with a direct emphasis on cargo theft and low value placed on crew/cargo/vessel ransoming. This may change but violence will undoubtedly inform pirate tactics making it a very volatile and dangerous place to transit. We see the Nigerians bolstering their defences against piracy with increased patrols and arrests but this has seemingly pushed the problem towards Benin which is now facing increasing piracy threats in its coastal zone. This is of concern because around 60 per cent of Benin's GDP comes from its port, which also serves West African countries further inland. Of concern, is that if nothing is done to prevent attacks happening here international companies will not continue to operate thus having a devastating economic impact on the country.

With the fragility of many new states along the Gulf of Guinea, propensity for coups and fragile economies susceptible to external vulnerabilities, the need to bolster maritime security becomes ever pressing. Joint Beninese and Nigerian patrols

now take place but the area to cover is similarly as vast and resources limited. The Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa (MOWCA) is a sub-regional intergovernmental organisation that represents common maritime/transit transport interests of twenty-five countries of West and Central Africa. It is cooperating with the International Maritime Organisation to strengthen coastal defences in relation to the rise and threat of piracy; however, its mandate is maritime safety more generally rather than counter-piracy *per se*. Bolstering coastal defences at a national and sub-regional level appear to be the main thrust to counter piracy operations in the West African region but significantly more resources are required to ensure robust counter piracy defences.

Focusing on Land-based Insecurities

As with Somalia, everyone agrees the key to combating piracy at sea in West Africa requires a focus on land-based insecurities. However, the West African region is territorially far larger and more disparate than the Horn of Africa, where Somalia is situated. The sheer number of countries involved in West Africa means success will lie with regional responses rather than narrow, single state solutions. Indeed UN Resolution 2039 states just this and calls on the countries in this region to convene a summit in 2012 to establish a swift regional response.²

The process is hindered by inadequate resources and the absence of a harmonized legal framework for maritime security, as stated by B. Lynn Pascoe, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs.² Effective responses in both regions require better management and control of maritime domains, as well as legal reforms to address maritime criminality, sub-regional cooperation, and onshore political and development adjustments to mitigate the incentives that motivate many pirates.³ These factors have so far been missing, although we see greater impetus in east Africa to address the juridical elements of piracy, 'catch and release' remains a reality, and a large population of unemployed youth presents many more recruits. The same demographic exists in West Africa, along with an abundance of unregistered arms: a remnant of the Cold War, numerous civil wars and the recent Libyan uprising.

Piracy is also just one aspect of a larger political, economic, social and political network, as it is in Somalia. Although the genesis of West African piracy is not as vehemently attributed to illegal and over fishing or toxic dumping, these issues bear heavily on regional dynamics and if left unchecked, will continue to function as drivers of piracy.⁴ A nexus of clan and business interests underpins piracy in Somalia. In West Africa piracy reflects the interests and activities of wider (and often international) criminal networks, emanating mainly but not solely from the Niger Delta, driven by purely illicit, financial incentives, and underscored by perceived injustices over oil wealth distribution. This last point has been widely recognised as fuelling oil-driven criminality in the Niger Delta. Communal violence in oil producing countries such as Nigeria has also sparked the growth of organised criminal activity such as oil bunkering, piracy and kidnappings. Oil bunkering is a lucrative activity with an estimated 100,000 barrels of oil lost each day to illicit activity in the Niger Delta; Nigeria's Finance Minister claimed in May 2012 that Nigeria was losing approximately one-fifth of its oil exports every day.⁵ Fuel is subsidised and therefore cheaper in Nigeria, which allows criminal syndicates and smaller traders to trade fuel on the black market, mainly to their neighbours at world oil prices set in US dollars (making it a profitable trade).⁶ International criminal networks also transport oil to the world market, and between 2001 and 2004, the Nigerian Navy detained 17 ships and 56 barges involved in illegal bunkering.⁷

Yet despite this image of illicit disorder, and in spite of the threat of piracy in West Africa, the oil industry continues to flourish in the region. Chevron employs approximately 12,500 Nigerians and has revived and upgraded the Warri port to be one of the busiest in Nigeria. Shell, notwithstanding persistent damage to pipelines, infrastructure and loss of oil through nefarious activities, continues to operate, allegedly producing 39 per cent of the nation's oil.² The recent commissioning of the West Africa Gas Pipeline consolidates the company's reach along the Gulf of Guinea. Anadarko's recent oil finds off Liberia and Sierra Leone, along with LUKOIL's discoveries in Cote d'Ivoire and their recent announcement of US\$100 million investment in exploration activities at its offshore block in Sierra Leone,³ likewise underscore the 'untapped' potential for energy reserves in West Africa generally. Many countries are emerging from periods of civil war and presenting themselves as ready for foreign investment, and oil and gas are significant factors in the region's economic development. However, the shipping industry's experience of ineffective regional security mechanisms underlines more general and sustained operational concerns.

We do see organisations such as Nigeria's BRACED commission (the acronym stands for the group of six states located in the Niger Delta: Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa, Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta States) forming economic unions to drive development in regions reliant on the oil industry. The Niger Delta has been acutely affected by the 'oil curse' and is motivation to address the main security and economic challenges surrounding this.² There is recognition that 'development cannot happen without security and without development insecurity continues.' This dichotomy can be said to be representative of the region more generally. As with Somalia, piracy has highlighted a major security issue that draws attention to the fact that any 'solution' lies beyond a limited focus on what's happening at sea.

Somalia, as a foreign policy agenda, has been overshadowed by Afghanistan and Iraq in the last decade. It has, however, remained a high priority – to varying degrees, as the threat from almost twenty years of instability and violence has seen the rise of militant groups.² The billion dollar impact of piracy and militant activity on the global shipping industry, and the as yet uncorroborated link between the two, appears to have renewed attention to the region. We see similar characteristics emerging in West Africa, which have forced a wider, more global consideration of the issue.. Piracy is having a major impact on the region’s economy, and on the shipping industry in West Africa in particular. Inadequately resourced regional and judicial responses can not contend with the region’s criminality, which is sufficiently well resourced to continue functioning as a driver of other security issues such as piracy. As with Somalia, if this situation remains unchecked then the capacity to address problems at source becomes increasingly difficult. It is in this vein that the issue of piracy should be considered and viewed globally, with responses to it driven both regionally and locally, solutions incorporating both a land and littoral nexus.

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ISLAM AS A GLOBAL CULT

by Faisal Devji ❖ OXFORD DIARY

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MUCH CONTROVERSY has been generated recently by the discovery of an 'anti-Muslim' course run at a US military academy. Now denounced at the highest echelons of the army, this course included recommendations that the Geneva Conventions be ignored as irrelevant, the President overruled by the military and Mecca and Medina bombed in order to 'degrade Islam to cult status'. While it is the apparently 'Islamophobic' character of the course that has received greatest attention, more interesting is the fact that such obviously illegal and indeed treasonable ideas seem to have been accepted by the soldiers exposed to them without demur. While attacking Muslims around the world in the ways envisaged by it is so foolhardy as to be inconceivable, in other words, the course nonetheless illustrates a serious breakdown of military discipline within the US Army. And unlike the incidents of prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib, for instance, which could be attributed at least in part to the exigencies of battlefield conditions, the breakdown of discipline in an American classroom possesses no such justification.

In this case as in so many others, the focus on 'Islamophobia', and therefore on Muslims as victims, does little more than obscure the dangers that such views pose for institutions like the US Army, which liberals are all too ready to accuse of tolerating hate speech. But in doing so they are diverted by a red herring, since the true scandal has to do with the fact that it is increasingly difficult to create a military culture and maintain discipline within it in some traditional way, by removing soldiers from outside influences and encouraging a distinctive esprit de corps. In the past, of course, it was precisely the creation of a self-contained military culture that was seen as promoting dysfunctional forms of camaraderie cut off from the norms of society at large—with Hollywood dwelling lovingly on such instances of dysfunction in films like *Apocalypse Now*. And so the Army was pushed to look more like the society that surrounded it, by including women and homosexuals within its ranks and civilian norms about discrimination in its regulations.

But today it is practically impossible to insulate American soldiers in particular from a society that also seems to have lost its norms, having been absorbed into a globalized media environment encouraging the continual fragmentation of audiences and constituencies. Exposed as they now are to a multiplicity of voices and views on the Internet and elsewhere, these men and women are easily able to escape military culture by participating in virtual debates and espousing global causes that go well beyond the cloistered world of army discipline. And in doing so they smuggle private concerns into the heart of their institution, as did the personnel accused of abuse at Abu Ghraib, developing what in effect are cults that are capable of fragmenting military culture from within. The fact that these soldiers are still not representative of American society, but drawn into a volunteer army

largely from certain classes, regions and ethnicities, makes the emergence of such cults within the army even more of a possibility.

Unlike the cults we have become used to, however, with their closed and hierarchical worlds, these new and globalized forms are remarkably egalitarian in their conception. Everyone can participate in them as equals because they have no institutional presence apart from a virtual one. So it is now the institutional hierarchy of the army that represents an old-fashioned norm, under threat from an egalitarian if unequal new society suffused with global influences. Symbols of military hierarchy like ranks and uniforms can even be torn from their institutional context and turned into the fetishes of an egalitarian cult, as demonstrated by the appearance, behaviour and fantasies of the Norwegian anti-Islam activist Anders Breivik. Those who led the controversial military course in the United States, then, and who recommended Islam's 'downgrading' to cult status, were themselves displaying cultic behaviour. Yet they were not altogether wrong in thinking about Islam as a cult, because factors similar to the ones that have introduced cult behavior into the US Army are doing so in the incomparably larger world of Islam as well.

The idea that a religion of well over a billion adherents can be described in the prose of victimization is an extraordinary one. Such an idea belongs to al-Qaeda more than any other movement in the Muslim world, though it is one that has now been accepted by many who otherwise would have nothing to do with terrorism. And these include liberals and leftists from other religious backgrounds who are worried about 'Islamophobia'. Indeed other forms of globalized Muslim protest, including the recurring demonstrations over insults supposedly made against Muhammad, starting with the Rushdie controversy in 1989, manifestly do not entertain a vision of Islam as a victimized faith. On the contrary these mass mobilizations presume the ability of Muslims to deal with their opponents as equals, and perhaps because of this entirely reject the vocabulary of holy war and martyrdom that is characteristic of al-Qaeda's cultic individualism. Is this perhaps due to the fact that mobilizations in defence of the Prophet occur on a global scale while still being grounded institutionally in the nation state as the protests of its citizens?

The link between 'Islamophobes' who want to defend what they see as a West under threat, and Muslim militants who seek to do the same for a victimized Islam, has to do with the fact that the identities of both lack any institutional grounding. For the former, Western civilization as a global whole is ill served by national states and even the international order, while from the latter's equally global perspective, Islam can only be seen as a minority religion capable of being victimized. The paradox of this situation is that the larger the numbers to be defended, the more likely are they to be seen as vulnerable in the global arena. This way of thinking, of course, possesses a genealogy going back to European theories of race and civilization in the nineteenth century. For then, too, such global categories were seen as being vulnerable because they lacked institutional form, naming instead a reality that exceeded all existing political institutions.

The sudden demise of al-Qaeda and its global form of terrorism means the idea of Islam as a victimized religion has been inherited by liberals and leftists, with Muslims

of a more 'extremist' temperament moving in other directions. The Islamists, whose state-centered vision of Islamic revolution had temporarily been displaced by al-Qaeda's global model of Muslim radicalism, still exist and in places even exercise more influence than they once did. But their twentieth century ideologies, drawing upon communist as well as fascist forms, are no longer dynamic and can only move in a liberal-democratic direction, as has happened most clearly in Turkey. More important are the Salafis, whose adherence to the practices of the earliest Muslim generation owes as much to Euro-American scholarship on Islam as it does to this early generation. Salafism rejects the ideological and statist vision of the Islamists, whose attempt at defining Islam as a unitary and even totalitarian system they discard for a completely fragmented religious ideal. The heroic element of Islamist politics, therefore, disappears to be replaced by a depoliticized and

conservative faith that turns away from any serious engagement with the wider world to focus on issues of bodily practice and comportment, much as minority groups like the Amish or Mennonites in the Americas. And in this way the Salafis have transformed Islam into the defeated cult that al-Qaeda had feared and some in the US army desired.

I am indebted to Shruti Kapila for the conversations that have allowed me to clarify my thoughts on this subject.

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THE SCARBOROUGH SHOAL STANDOFF

by Kit Dawney ❖ CHINA DISPATCH

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A STANDOFF between the Philippines and China at Scarborough Shoal has brought tensions in the South China Sea to their highest level since the 1994 Mischief Reef incident. The dispute arose on 8 April when the Philippines sent its navy to search Chinese fishing vessels operating in the disputed area. Chinese Maritime Surveillance Forces vessels subsequently arrived, provoking the Philippines to deploy its only warship, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar. Manila later withdrew the Gregorio del Pilar, but China sent out two Fishery Law Enforcement Command vessels. A standoff has ensued, with the Philippines requesting a diplomatic resolution to the crisis but refusing to retreat. Bilateral relations have quickly deteriorated, with China introducing restrictions on imports of Philippine bananas and calling on tour groups to leave, dealing a severe blow to the Philippine economy. The Chinese media is talking of war, although a fishing ban implemented by both sides may let tensions subside.

The Aquino government's determination in this case is in contrast with its own decision to accept Chinese built 'fishermen's shelters' on Mischief Reef in 1994. President Aquino's stance, though, belies the Philippine navy's weakness when compared with China's Maritime Surveillance Forces and People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). Manila seems to be counting on assurances of US support. Indeed, the Philippines and the US drew attention to their military ties on 1 May, two weeks after launching long-planned 'Balikatan' exercises, which included beach landings on the Philippine island of Palawan. In recent months, Washington has raised its annual military support to the Philippines to a (still-meagre) US\$30 million, and stated that freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is a matter of US national interest.

Those fearing a major war, though, should consider that US support for Manila has its limits. There are two aspects to this. First, the US relationship with China is strategically important. The two states' economies are so deeply interwoven and the implications of a breach in relations so significant that maintaining a working relationship is a priority for both capitals. Worth noting,

too, are the Chinese government agencies engaged in the Sea: the Maritime Surveillance Forces; the Fishery Law Enforcement Command; the governments of Hainan and Guangdong Provinces; and the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN); as well as customs and coast guard. In theory, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has authority over them all, but the reality is that its sway is limited.² Judging whether China's aggressive stance derives from central government policy or from inter-agency competition is difficult, and the lack of clarity in this may limit President Obama's willingness to face Beijing down. Second, the Philippines and the US have a conflicted relationship, rooted in their colonial history. The US withdrew from Clark airbase and Subic Bay naval facility in 1992 after the Philippine Senate rejected a treaty to extend US basing rights (and after a volcanic eruption destroyed Clark). The two countries have since relied on ad hoc defence cooperation, such as anti-terrorist training for Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Special Forces in Mindanao, but their defence ties lack the intensity of the pre-1992 era.³

The US also has room to step back from its 'security guarantee', as the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty between Washington and Manila on which it is based is equivocal in its provisions. Article IV states: 'Each party recognises that an attack in the Pacific Area on either of the parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes.' Article V also deals with an attack on island territories or forces 'in the Pacific'. Washington may thus limit offers of support to the Philippines to funds or materiel 'in accordance with constitutional processes', or could even assert that the South China Sea lies outside the 'Pacific area'.

Of course, failing to support the Philippines raises risks for Washington. The San Francisco 'hub and spoke' system is strong but brittle; a loss of faith in the US hub may weaken all the treaty partner spokes. On top of this general point are the specific threats that Chinese control of the South China Sea could pose to maritime supply lanes for the Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese economies, or to the aspirations of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) states, which require the fisheries to feed their populations and aspire to unlock the Sea's latent energy reserves. From an operational perspective, Chinese dominance of the sea would also hinder US maritime and airborne intelligence collection activities. However, it is not clear how much

Chinese control of Scarborough Shoal would threaten these interests. Manila has no choice but to turn to the US, as do most regional powers, all regional powers trade extensively with China already and so policymakers may not fear interdiction by PLAN vessels, and operational formulae can always change.

Resolving the dispute will be difficult, though, notwithstanding the mutual fishing ban implemented in mid-May. China has accepted the Guidelines on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, a non-binding statement of intent, but the adoption of a binding Code of Conduct looks very difficult to achieve. Broader multilateral negotiations seem unlikely; the driving force between existing (if limited) agreements was ASEAN, and Chinese client Cambodia is holding the ASEAN presidency in 2012. China also seems to believe that regional states have become more assertive thanks to US support, contributing to the already significant strategic distrust between Washington and Beijing. Furthermore, the Communist Party leadership will want to avoid any appearance of weakness as the economy slows and the leadership transition takes place. In this context, even a diplomatic solution to the spat may not ease broader tensions.

The dispute, then, may be most important as a signal of Chinese geopolitical aspirations, and any reading that Beijing is becoming more aggressive could have significant economic consequences. A perceived rise in regional tensions could provoke investors to reappraise their political risk, as fears of conflict become more accurately priced into ancillary costs such as insurance or financial derivatives. Any such repricing would arguably more closely match the reality of contemporary Asia, characterised sometimes as a region of hot economics and cold politics, than does the current market bullishness. It could also benefit other markets, as the differential on investment returns between regions may narrow, particularly if a concurrent Korean crisis

broke out. A severe rise in tensions or small war in the South China Sea could thus induce some capital to move to seemingly safer regions, perhaps Latin America, perhaps back to the US.

Normal Angell wrote *The Great Illusion* in 1910, arguing that the economic interdependence of Europe's economies made war inherently futile, only to have his thesis founder in August 1914. Contemporary Asia recalls Angell's Europe in that its economies are similarly interlinked, but its governmental systems are mutually suspicious and subject to capture by nationalism. This latest spike in tensions in the South China Sea is a good illustration of the risks of not taking that concern into account. Investors should take note.

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GREEN GROWTH IN THE GULF?

by Mari Luomi ❖ EMISSIONS

GREEN GROWTH. A major attempt to resuscitate the concept of sustainable development, combining it with the fights against climate change and the global recession, is under way. Its roll-out will culminate in the Rio+20 UN conference in June this year, which will focus on green economy among its two central themes. The environmental aspects of sustainable development have barely started to figure on Middle Eastern governments' agendas, and we are already presented with version 2.0. What does green growth exactly mean? Is it any better than sustainable development was? Can it help make the Middle East any 'greener'?

The idea of green growth is largely a product of the 2008 economic crisis. Originated in Asia, it is now being promoted globally as a win-win approach to environmental and economic sustainability, by the World Bank, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the government of South Korea, among others. It has been described as

'emphasising environmentally sustainable economic progress to foster low-carbon, socially inclusive development.' So far, South Korea has initiated its broadest application, declaring that Low Carbon Green Growth is now to be country's economic paradigm. Also, Korea's Global Green Growth Institute, which spreads the ideology, has already expanded into countries as different as Denmark and the United Arab Emirates.

Last year, the Beirut-based Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED), an NGO, published a report that advocates green economy as an alternative development model for Arab states. The report explores the economic and job-creating benefits of a range of green growth strategies and actions, including sustainable agriculture, water and energy efficiency, subsidy cuts, renewable energy investments, wastewater treatment, public transport, green building, and eco-tourism.

Najib Saab, AFED's Secretary General, has described green growth as a 'rebranding of sustainable development to seize the prevailing global economic crisis.' At least from an environmental perspective, this seems to be its main weakness. If sustainable development did not work in bringing environmental degradation and other negative impacts of economic

growth to the core of policy-making, how is green growth going to do the trick?

It's the 'win-win synergies', they say. Green growth is a concept of and for the economy. Its main message is optimistic in that it proposes a happy marriage between environmental sustainability and indefinite economic growth, which are generally considered hard to reconcile. People tend to either regard the Earth as a system with certain physical limits (like atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations), or believe that technology and innovation will make these limits disappear, allowing for perpetual growth of GDP and financial wealth.

When the economy is understood as part of the ecosystem, and not vice versa, indicators like the ecological footprint serve as calls for urgent action. According to this indicator, in 2007, the world's population was already consuming resources and ecological services at 1.5 times the world's carrying capacity. We only have one, but we took one and a half. An average UAE or Qatari resident's footprint would have required almost six planets. Notably, these figures exclude the footprint of everything that is produced for export.

Those who are pessimistic about continued business-as-usual, like myself, call for bringing natural resource exploitation back to sustainable levels, in an equitable manner, while still promoting human prosperity. Efficiency, technological development and innovation are important vehicles in getting us there and even stretching the limits. But most fundamentally, we should work to change environmentally unsustainable behaviour and consumption patterns, at all levels, from individuals to businesses, industries, and governments. Where civil society is confined, like in most Middle Eastern states, governments become the prime bearers of responsibility for incentivising behavioural change through education, awareness-raising, enforcement of environmental legislation, and market instruments. In order to share this burden, they should also more actively engage with and allow breathing space for those few environmental NGOs that do exist. For example, awareness of the environmental externalities (impacts that are not included in the price) of existing energy and water consumption patterns would pave the way for badly needed subsidy reforms.

With Arab Spring countermeasures still in full swing in most Gulf monarchies, momentum towards such objectives has fizzled. Despite gas shortages, Dubai has frozen its utility prices and Saudi Arabia ranks in the world's top 10 countries for gas flaring. On the other hand, there are examples of positive steps, such as Abu Dhabi's metro, and Saudi Arabia's decision to phase out subsidised production of wheat by 2016.

On the other side of the development debate are the 'business-as-usual optimists' who think that economic growth is like pedalling a bicycle: if you stop, you fall over. Growth is seen as an end in itself. While Arab regimes have fallen in the past year due to their inability to master their economies, this was not due to a failure to grow quantitatively. Throughout 2009-2010, annual GDP growth rates in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya stayed above two per cent.

Still, economic growth and sustainability continue to rank

at the top of Middle Eastern states' agendas. Perhaps ironically, faith in the capability of technology to solve problems seems to be the strongest in the more conservative monarchies of the region. Climate change? Plug carbon capture and storage in the oil fields and all will be fine. Water scarcity? Just desalinate some more. Marine ecosystems destroyed by artificial islands? We'll create new ones.

Too often, ecosystems are seen as subsets of economies and societies, and technology is touted as the silver bullet for what ails it. Like Steven Kotler and Peter Diamandis argue in their new book, '... through the lens of technology, few resources are truly scarce; they're mainly inaccessible.' Technology optimists indeed have impressive evidence to back up their argument: the industrial and green (i.e. agricultural) revolutions, desalination and clean energy technologies, the oil peak that never arrives, and so on.

Unfortunately for the environment, people seem to more than happy to kick the can down the road, especially when they're being told that nothing is amiss. This is still the case in most countries of the Middle East where information on local and global environmental threats is scarce and overshadowed by more conventional security issues and poverty, or hyper-fast modernisation and social contracts based on consumerism.

The limits to growth, or 'planetary boundaries' as some describe them, are both fuzzy and inconvenient (as banal as that may sound). Climate change, biodiversity losses, land system changes and oceanic acidification are all back of the mind issues. They are relatively difficult to quantify and communicate. They also occur over long periods of time and have uneven impacts across the globe. And status quo, business-as-usual options are always easier, for governments and consumers alike. Behavioral change is hard.

If the solution to our environmental unsustainability lies outside the economy, in people and institutions, could green growth change anything? The UAE, as the forerunner, has recently announced that a green growth plan would be incorporated in its development strategy for the current decade. It will seek to promote renewable and clean energy and technologies, green jobs, sustainable urban planning and transport, climate change mitigation, organic agriculture, and biodiversity. Most importantly, however, the plan will include new legislation and policies, programmes, education and awareness-raising to 'rationalise' the use of natural resources and increase recycling.

From a limited system perspective, all the right words are there. The title of the UAE's green economy plan could just as easily be 'sustainable development 2.0'. What's different is the way in which the UAE has packaged its newest green initiative. Green growth (or green economy) seems to be achieving what sustainable development has not: bringing environmental issues to the core of policy-making. This paradigm is something that, on paper at least, sounds attractive to both mainstream economists and mainstream environmentalists – hence a potential win-win in this sense too.

With this bridge built, the next challenge will be implementation. Although previous Gulf development plans and environmental policies provide many

examples of failure to implement, perhaps we should give the new ones the benefit of the doubt, for now at least.

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GOING TO WAR WITH THE ALLIES YOU HAVE

by Stephen Saideman ❖ XENOPHILE

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IN MY YEAR on the Joint Staff a decade ago, two phrases appeared in all talking points about the NATO missions in the Balkans: 'In Together, Out Together' and 'Hasten the Day'. The first referred to a promise by President George W. Bush that the US would not pull out of Bosnia and Kosovo before the Allies did. The second referred to trying to foster conditions in the Balkans such that NATO could leave sooner rather than later.

How did that play out? NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) became a small residual headquarters, the Canadians and Americans left (mostly), and the Europeans remained behind under a new EU mission (EUFOR, for 'European Force'). As far as hastening the day, eight years later a much diminished EUFOR is still in Bosnia, and NATO is still very much in Kosovo, still playing, after more than a decade, an active and pivotal role.

The reason for the nostalgic look back at NATO in 2002 is that 2012 is looking very similar. NATO recently met in Chicago, approving of various decisions with two standing out: the future in Afghanistan and Smart Defense. Regarding the former the 'In Together, Out Together' promise has already been made and broken, while much lip service as well to Hastening the Day. France has elected a new President promising to leave Afghanistan now (2012) rather than tomorrow (2013), but it is not the first member of the Alliance to break its promise. The Dutch and the Canadians were the first to cease combat operations, even if both returned with less risky training missions. Australia, while not a NATO member, is an ISAF troop contributor and vital part of NATO's efforts in Afghanistan. It is also looking to an early exit. 2014 was supposed to be the year of transition, but now it is looking more like the year in which the international community will complete its departure.

With 'In Together, Out Together' busted, how about 'Hasten the Day'? Ceding more and more territory to Afghan control seems reasonable. But if hastening the day is understood to mean achieving some semblance of progress on the key non-military pillars of governance and development, then hastening that day's arrival will not have achieved much.

The reality is that patience has been worn thin, by a combination of fiscal crises, very uneven burden-sharing, mounting casualties (especially "green on blue" attacks involving Afghan security forces shooting at NATO personnel), frustration at perceived lack of progress, and President Karzai's frequently alienating public statements. It is actually remarkable that it took

this long, more than ten years after 9/11 and more than half that since NATO got seriously involved (2005-2006). Given the difficulties of measuring progress and the many opportunities for bad things to occur (two major prison breaks, at least two major attacks close to Parliament, Koran burnings, riots and all the rest), NATO's staying power has actually been quite impressive.

NATO has demonstrated operational stick-to-it-iveness while members have learned that they can't rely too much on each other. The Smart Defense initiative is about members doing peacetime planning. They coordinate their weapons procurement so that countries can specialize and not duplicate. This makes a lot of sense in a perfect world, with each NATO member performing certain functions so that as an alliance, all capability requirements are covered. But if Afghanistan and Libya have taught us anything, it's that allies are unreliable, as politically unpalatable as that may seem. Specialization creates dependence on others to compensate for undeveloped or underdeveloped capabilities, but can result in a dangerous imbalance when coupled with the inevitable restrictions such as national caveats that limit how and when those capabilities are deployed on operations

Smart Defense planners should consider which allies they expect to rely upon and plan accordingly. There are relatively systematic differences among the allies that create two categories: those with and those without coalition governments (Denmark is a key exception),¹ Birds of a feather should flock together. The British, French and Americans can plan together to rely upon each other as their political systems tend to produce less caveats and other restrictions on how their troops are used in NATO operations. Member states with coalition governments, such as the Italians, Spaniards and Germans, can plan together since they always seem to be among the most restricted. The real challenge is for countries that have been inconsistent and that are tempted to pool or partner with countries that do not share the same style of behavior. So, the Belgian-Dutch combination makes sense for many reasons, but they may not be as compatible as some would expect given how constrained Belgium was in Afghanistan and how assertive it was in the Libyan mission.

The reality is that fiscal pressures will predominate, forcing countries to cut defence budgets, so planning to specialize to deal with these pressures makes a great deal of sense. But military planners and their civilian bosses should be clear-eyed about the consequences. National caveats created problems in Afghanistan, but they're likely to be even worse on the next mission where dependencies are greater due to Smart Defense planning.

To be clear, NATO remains really the only choice for multilateral military operations. Coalitions of the willing have many of the same problems as NATO (including

caveats and the like) but with few of the benefits. NATO has shown great persistence in very difficult circumstances. Because each member of the Alliance faces its own domestic challenges when engaged in a multilateral military operation, NATO will always be sub-optimal. That does not mean that these countries should not rely upon NATO, just that they should do so with a full appreciation that many of the promises made—in together, out together, hastening the day, smart defence—are easily revised and re-interpreted.

NOTES

1. Stephen M. Saideman and David P. Auerswald, 'Comparing Caveats: Understanding the Sources of National Restrictions upon NATO's Mission in

Afghanistan,' *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2012): 67–84.

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RISE OF THE SUPERACTORS

by Scott Smith ❖ DISCONTINUITIES

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CHEN GUANGCHEN made his daring escape from house arrest in late April and then appeared in Beijing at a most sensitive diplomatic moment in time, just prior to a major visit by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. He had suddenly turned a glaring spotlight on what was one of a number of human rights sore points China had no intention of addressing during her visit. His personal plight led to a global political crisis that couldn't be ignored, delayed or swept under the rug. In just a few short hours, Chen went from relative obscurity to capturing the attention of global media, as the delicate political and economic negotiations between the world's two largest powers were derailed—embarrassing both sides into courses of action they probably wouldn't have otherwise taken.

With his choice of timing and clever delivery of a shock to the diplomatic system, Chen became the latest in an emerging and amorphous category of individuals I broadly call 'superactors.' In another time and place, Chen could have ended up yet another opaque human rights case in search of dénouement. Instead, he chose his moment and stage. He went global, not only by surprising government officials in Beijing and Washington. He took it a step further calling into a congressional hearing and speaking directly to power. Just a month after his breakout from a heavily guarded home in Dongshigu Village in Shandong Province, Chen now sits in New York City with his wife and two children, equipped with a valid US visa and preparing to study as a visiting scholar at New York University. Chen's actions have nudged US-China relations and put human rights back in the spotlight.

Like a superhero without a cape or super powers – or maybe a figure from a minor mythology – a superactor emerges rapidly or unexpectedly to disrupt and redirect major events around himself, individually affecting change on a regional or global scale. Governments worldwide are beginning to recognize the potential impact of the superactor as they belatedly grasp the power of network-scale disruption within the interdependent systems whose benefits they have been relying on for stability for almost two decades. What they haven't yet understood is the numbers, the diversity of leverage, and the influence these superactors will have on these systems—as opponents, next-generation

architects, or disruptive alternatives.

The idea of a superactor builds on Thomas Friedman's thinking in *Longitudes and Attitudes*.¹ Friedman wrote about 'super-empowered individuals', typified by Osama Bin Laden and his emergence on the world stage, as those who could 'wage war' against a single country. It was a natural evolution of the charismatic terrorist leaders of the 1970s. Around the same time, Thomas P.M. Barnett described super-empowered individuals as drivers of what he calls 'system perturbations' in his book *The Pentagon's New Map* – vertical shocks which set off horizontal waves growing in impact over time.² Like Friedman, Barnett points to globalization as a key enabler of perturbations, allowing shock waves to travel far and wide and experienced almost simultaneously by the globally networked among us.

The theme was picked up by theorist John Robb in his work on next-generation warfare, and also discussed by Adam Elkus and Crispin Burke in *Small Wars Journal*.³ They describe the super-empowered individual as 'possessing the knowledge and/or access to critical nodes in complex social systems and the power and willingness to leverage such, to either change the system's rule set or at least make a strong challenge to it.'

Robb, Elkus, Burke, Mark Safranski of the ZenPundit blog, and others, look at super-empowerment through the models of evolving warfare. What makes them interesting is that they almost exclusively focus on disruption as a type of security conflict, as a force multiplier for smaller parties to asymmetric struggle. Figures such as Bin Laden, Henry Okah of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Julian Assange of Wikileaks are exemplars of super-empowered individual. All use high and low technology to attack perceived weaknesses in globalized systems—stock markets, diplomatic alliances or pipelines (or all three). The most common examples are disruptions of a destructive sort, seeking to bring down one system and replace it with another.

The exception is Friedman's example of Jody Williams in *Longitudes and Attitudes*.⁴ Williams is the anti-landmine campaigner who, in conjunction with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, won the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts. Williams galvanized attention to landmines by bypassing normal channels and organizing her own anti-landmine conference, drawing in sympathetic diplomats and media, and effectively doing an end-run around an established but brittle diplomatic

system. Though more of an acceleration than sudden strike, as in the case of Chen, Williams nonetheless substantially changed the tempo of the negotiation process herself, and even the framework in which they took place,

As power wanes amid global turmoil, with weakened states contracting as their economic powers shrink, as secrecy is strained because of the transparency that technology can bring, and policing is stretched beyond its limits, I expect we will see more superactors emerge—not just those attempting to knock wobbly systems off balance, but also to fill the vacuum where glaring miscalculations are already happening. A new generation of ‘philanthropreneurs’ is emerging, fueled by both technology and money. Some of these powerful individuals are stepping into areas ripe for disruption, including education funding, international relief, human rights (see Chen, whose game is clearly not yet played out), and scientific and medical research.

What makes a superactor? We don’t really know. Up to now, superactors have been human anomalies, and little has been done to understand how they differ from other business, military or humanitarian leaders. We live in an era when the tools of power can quickly become concentrated in one place in the hands of a single individual. We need to know more about superactors if we are to fully appreciate how the next few decades might unfold. In my profession as a forecaster and analyst, we spend much of our time trying to understand external drivers – the possible impacts of events, disruptions caused by innovations, and how society will react and adapt to them. We spend far less time understanding

how such elements are embodied in people, and how individuals can themselves become shaping forces.

NOTES

1. Thomas Friedman, ‘Prologue: The Super-Story,’ Chapter in *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World After September 2011* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002), 3-6. Excerpt available online at: <http://www.thomasfriedman.com/bookshelf/longitudes-and-attitudes/prologue>
2. Thomas P.M. Barnett, ‘Blast from my past: PNM’s ‘New Rules for a New Crisis,’ *GoBlogization* (19 June 2010). URL: <http://thomaspmbarnett.com/globlogization/2010/6/19/blast-from-my-past-pnms-new-rules-for-a-new-crisis.html>
3. Adam Elkus and Captain Crispin Burke, ‘WikiLeaks, Media, and Policy: A Question of Super-Empowerment,’ *Small Wars Journal* (29 September 2010). URL: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/a-question-of-super-empowerment>
4. Mark Friedman, ‘Prologue: The Super-Story.’

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