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Stein Tønneson:

## **A 'GLOBAL CIVIL WAR'**

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This paper is written by the director of PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo), Stein Tønneson. He argues that the conflict between Al Qaeda and the United States may be analysed as a 'global civil war' since the conflict cannot be labelled neither an 'international war', nor a 'civil war'. Tønneson elaborates at some length on the foundations for his use of the concept global civil war, namely Qaeda's trans-national character and the globalisation of US home security. Possible counter-arguments like the conflict not being a *war*, and not being *new* are investigated - and refuted - before Tønneson concludes by advancing a series of counter-strategies to diminish the risk - and escalation - of an eventual global civil war.

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# A 'Global Civil War'?

By Stein Tønnesson<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

As a group of researchers focussing on terrorism noted already in 1998, 'the threat of catastrophic terrorism spans the globe, defying ready classification as solely foreign or domestic.'<sup>2</sup> Like other foreign policy analysts, peace researchers normally distinguish between international and civil wars. While the former are waged between states, the latter are fought between rival armies within one state. Since the wars of liberation in the colonies during the 1946-75 period do not fit into any of the two categories, they have been categorised in the PRIO/Uppsala dataset as 'extra-systemic'.<sup>3</sup> They made up a substantial part of the wars registered in the 1946-75 period, but since 1976 all wars have been categorised as international, civil or 'internationalized intrastate'.<sup>4</sup> The number of civil wars has generally been higher than the international wars, since 1960 considerably higher.<sup>5</sup>

The war that broke out on 11 September 2001 between Al-Qaeda and the United States does not seem to fit into either of the two normal categories, and also does not seem to be covered by the 'internationalized intrastate' label since it did not have its origin in any particular intrastate war. Although the US 'war on terror' includes an international war between the USA, its allies and the former Taliban government of Afghanistan, and although this war combined with an ongoing civil war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, the war between the USA and Al-Qaeda cannot be reduced to a combination of an international war and the civil war in Afghanistan, and did not simply represent an internationalisation of that civil war. It was not

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<sup>1</sup> This article builds on a paper presented at a seminar at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm, 10 April 2002 and a lecture at the University of Tromsø on 24 April 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Ashton Carter, John Deutch, and Philip Zelikow, 'Catastrophic Terrorism: Tackling the New Danger.' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 6, November/December 1998, pp. 80-94 (p. 82).

<sup>3</sup> Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg & Håvard Strand, 2001. *Armed Conflict 1946-2000: A New Dataset*. Paper presented at the Conflict data conference at Uppsala University, 8-9 June. A revised version may be found at [www.pcr.uu.se](http://www.pcr.uu.se).

<sup>4</sup> According to the SIPRI Yearbook, as many as 11 of the 15 most deadly conflicts in 2001 spilled over international borders. *SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, as summarised on <http://editors.sipri.se/pubs/yb02/ch01.html>.

<sup>5</sup> The 'democratic peace' theory was derived from the study of international wars. The finding is that democratic states have rarely if ever fought wars against each other. In the 1990s, peace research has

Afghanistan who initiated the attack against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, which cost the lives of almost 3000 people, although Afghanistan did provide sanctuary and training camps for Al-Qaeda. The initiator of the attack was not a state, but a transnational organisation with cells in a long range of countries, and with goals that cannot be confined to any particular state. Moreover, the United States did not limit its reaction to the attacks of 11 September to either a campaign of law enforcement or a war against Afghanistan. The US Bush administration instead launched a global war against a vaguely defined phenomenon called 'terrorism'. It included not only Al-Qaeda, but a number of both nationally and trans-nationally organised groups, as well as some states who were said to assist terrorist groups and possess or seek to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction.

It seems therefore, that the war between Al-Qaeda and the United States, both from Al-Qaeda's and the USA's perspective, is neither an international nor a traditional civil war. It may represent a new kind of war, linked to the process of 'globalisation'. A 'globalisation of violence' may have opened an era of 'global civil wars'. Is this perhaps the first of a series of wars in a process of establishing a US-dominated global state?

The term 'global civil war' may seem a contradiction in terms. If a war goes beyond the borders of nation-states, then it is international and not civil. However, the war between Al-Qaeda and the United States is trans-national rather than international, and its features in many ways resemble those of internal wars. Just as in most internal insurgency wars, the armies of Al-Qaeda and the US do not operate on an equal level. Their power is extremely asymmetric. On one side is an almost global system of states, led by a superpower, on the other a clandestine group using surprise attacks against symbolic targets, and mass killings, to harm its adversary. Thus the war seems essentially civil, and must be analysed with the methods used for understanding civil wars, although it is trans-national and global in character. Intuitively, the term 'global civil war' thus seems appropriate. It does, however, presuppose the existence of a global society, or at least a process leading towards a global society. A 'civil war' can only exist within a 'society'. Hence, the term 'global civil war' is only appropriate if

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concentrated on the study of civil wars, and how democratic institutions affect the frequency of civil

mankind already constitutes one shared human society, or is on its way to becoming one.<sup>6</sup> This article does not build on the assumption that there already is a 'world society', but it builds on the assumption that the world *may be moving* towards a shared society, with the existing state system forming the framework of a global state. This may either be formed through more or less peaceful multilateral cooperation among a great number of states, or through a violent state-building process characterised by active warfare between one or several dominant states and a number of trans-nationally organised rebel armies, perhaps in alliance with a few dissident states. The article will first probe into the main reasons for suggesting that 'global civil war' is a suitable term for describing the conflict between Al-Qaeda and the USA, and then discuss some possible counter-arguments.

### **Al-Qaeda's trans-national character**

The Al-Qaeda (the word means 'base' or 'principle') grew out of a transnational community of radical Islamists who took part in the US-supported *jihad* against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the 1980s, with sanctuaries in Pakistan. The recruits came from a number of countries in the Middle East and Asia, and also from immigrant Muslim communities in Western Europe. The top leader, Osama bin Laden, grew up in the Arabian peninsula within the borders of the state known as 'Saudi Arabia', although his wealthy family had its roots in Jemen. Other key leaders of Al-Qaeda came from Egypt. The organization seems to have been formed in the late 1980s as a loose trans-national network, managed by a small group of people around bin Laden.<sup>7</sup> Their power within the network was built partly on a claim to represent the true will of the Prophet, partly on a considerable wealth derived from heritage and shady business. When the Taliban took control of most of Afghanistan in 1995-96, training camps were established for the organization in that country. Here young Islamists would come from all over the world to study the Koran, clandestine organizational techniques, and warfare. The training camps were lost when the US-supported Northern Alliance crushed the Taliban in late 2001. In May 2002 it was

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war.

<sup>6</sup> For an interesting discussion of whether 1989 led to the creation of a 'world society', see Jarle Simensen, 1999. 'Democracy and Globalization: Nineteen Eighty-nine and the "Third Wave"', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 391-411.

<sup>7</sup> A list of known members, an organisation chronology and English translations of statements and interviews with Osama bin Laden may be found in Yonah Alexander and Michael S. Swetnam, *Usama bin Laden's al-Qaida: Profile of a Terrorist Network*. Ardsley NY. Transnational Publishers, 2001.

reported that among the 384 captives from the war in Afghanistan, held by the US at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, there were citizens of more than 30 countries.<sup>8</sup>

Not only the recruitment, but also the organizational structure and armed operations of Al-Qaeda have had a global reach. Despite severe repression, the group remained able, in the second half of the 1990s, to operate inside some Arab countries, notably Saudi Arabia and Jemen, and they also probably had access to wealthy and powerful circles. Al-Qaeda seems to have been behind the attack against the US forces at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996 and also the daring attack on the USS Cole in Jemen in 2000. However, the organization did not limit its operations to the Middle East. The first attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 was probably made by associates of the people who formed Al-Qaeda, and it seems to have been proven that Al-Qaeda was involved in the suicide bombings against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Then came the spectacular attacks against New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. All Al-Qaedas known targets so far have been American, but in several parts of the world. The perpetrators seem to consider themselves as engaged in a global insurrectionary war against the USA.

What about their goals? Are they also global? It may not be pertinent to point out that the long term goal of Al-Qaeda is to Islamise all of humanity since this, at least in principle, would constitute the final goal of any missionary religion. Short to medium term goals are more relevant in defining the movement's character. Al-Qaeda is not a nationalist organization. It's aim is not to liberate any particular state, such as 'Saudi Arabia', and also not the Arab nation as a whole. Its first goal is to liberate Islam's holy places Mecca and Medina and force the withdrawal of all US occupation forces from the Arabian peninsula.<sup>9</sup> The shame of bearing witness to how the armies of the infidels garrison the core region of the Prophet seems to have been the main motivating force for Osama bin Laden's rupture with the Saudi regime in the early 1990s. Al-Qaeda aims not only at driving out the Americans, but also at liberating the peninsula from the moribund Saudi regime, who is guilty of collaboration with the infidels. After the Arabian peninsula, the radical Islamists of Al-Qaeda will no doubt

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<sup>8</sup> Tony Allen-Mills in *The Sunday Times*, May 26, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Bernhard Lewis, 1998. 'License to Kill. Usama bin Ladin's Declaration of Jihad.' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 6, November-December, pp. 14-19.



want to liberate other holy places, such as Baghdad and Jerusalem, in order to revive the Caliphate. It is clear from Al-Qaeda's propaganda that its leaders refute the legitimacy of all such states that have been formed in the Middle East since the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 and the abolition of the office of Caliph in 1924 (The Ottomans had succeeded the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad in their function as protectors of the faith after the Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258). Osama bin Laden's followers intend to resurrect a multi-national society – or empire, with a duty to protect Islam. If not entirely global, Al-Qaeda's goals go far beyond the national level. The immediate goal of his actions is probably to polarise the Islamic world between the truly faithful (the *umma*) and the regimes who collaborate with the United States, and thus strengthen the forces of radical Islam in the Muslim world in general, and the Arab lands in particular. In the words of Michael Scott Doran, bin Laden is engaged in 'a profoundly serious civil war over Arab and Muslim identity in the modern world.'<sup>10</sup>

Thus Al-Qaeda's recruitment, organization and goals are all trans-national, and the target of their operations is the leading global power.

### **The globalisation of US 'home security'**

From the US perspective, the war against Al-Qaeda is also global. The fact that a trans-national 'terrorist' group was able, during the Clinton administration, to hit a series of American targets abroad led to anxiety, committee work and planning, and the creation of some new anti-terrorist institutions, but not to any fundamental change in US national security policy. Home security and anti-terrorist measures continued to receive far less attention from politicians, government officials and analysts than concerns for more traditional security matters like the relationship to Russia, China, and to 'rogue states'. During the first eight months of the Bush administration, the main security-related goal of the White House was to build a National Missile Defense (NMD) that could shield the home territory from attacks by other states. However, when Al-Qaeda launched its devastating attack against two of the main symbols of US economic and military power on 11 September 2001, Washington rapidly redefined its national security, building on the many proposals that anti-

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Scott Doran, 'Somebody Else's Civil War.' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 1,

terrorist specialists had been putting forward for several years. While 11 September did not interrupt the NMD programme, Bush now launched a vigorous 'war on terrorism', including increased intelligence cooperation with other countries, measures to prevent the financing of terrorist groups,<sup>11</sup> threats against states who provided support to terrorist groups, and a sustained bombing campaign in Afghanistan, combined with logistical and other support to the Northern Alliance and the establishment of new bases in Central Asia. The 'war on terrorism' did not just target Al-Qaeda, but a range of insurrectionary movements, most of which operate predominantly within one nation (Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, FARC in Colombia, etc.). Rhetorical castigation of such movements was linked to attacks on three lesser enemy states, Iraq, Iran and North Korea, who were accused of developing Weapons of Mass Destruction and providing support to terrorists.

A particularly interesting part of the redefinition of US national security is the blurring of the traditional division between 'home security' and 'national security', and the internationalisation of US law enforcement.<sup>12</sup> There was general agreement that the FBI and the CIA would have to cooperate more closely than in the past, since an 'internal' security threat like the hijacking of an aircraft could very well be planned and operated from abroad. The CIA also seems to have preferred bringing suspected terrorists caught abroad to the prisons of third states, since the USA's own laws prevented the use of the most effective methods of interrogation.

In May 2002, President Bush also proposed to merge a number of institutions, such as the border police and the coast guard, under a new Department of Home Security. Part of the rationale for this reform was the impracticability of preventing unwanted visitors from entering US territory merely through tighter border controls. It would be more effective to cooperate with other states in collecting intelligence about possible visitors, and in creating a globally standardised system of smart passports that would

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January/February 2002, pp. 22-42 (pp. 23, 40).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Biersteker, 2002. 'Targeting Terrorist Finances: The New Challenges of Financial Market Globalization', in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (eds.), *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, London: Palgrave, pp. 74-84.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen E. Flynn, 'Beyond Border Control.' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6, November/December 2000, pp. 56-68. See also William Wechsler, 'Law in Order. Reconstructing U.S. National Security,' *The National Interest*, Spring 2002, pp. 17-28. Wechsler urges Bush to overcome 'the lack of integration between the law enforcement and the foreign policy communities.'



rapidly distinguish trustworthy travellers from those with a criminal or otherwise doubtful record. It was also seen as impractical to inspect all the containers that arrive in American ports every day, with their loads of products from all over the world. This would slow down international trade and make the US less competitive. Instead it was preferable to establish a US presence in all major ports of origin, and cooperate with local port authorities in making sure that only well certified companies could load containers on ships bound for the USA. The US government also asked the governments of the world's main shipping nations to allow US agents to inspect their ships on the high seas.

All of this represents crucial steps in the globalisation of US *home security*. In the years of the Second World War and the Cold War, US *national security* was already conceived within a global framework, but the enemy then was first an axis of states and then a Soviet-led camp, consisting of states and national liberation movements. The Cold War was a quasi-war between two state-based camps, separated in Europe by an 'iron curtain', and supporting opposite factions in Asian, African and Latin American civil wars. After the Cold War, the US government emphasised the creation of a free and truly global market of trade and investments, while at the same time demonstrating its military superiority in campaigns against states that were breaking international law (notably Iraq and Yugoslavia).

The redefinition of US security after 11 September was more radical because the enemy changed from unreliable or potentially hostile states to a loosely defined trans-national phenomenon. The USA needed to protect itself not only against a defined enemy, but against the risk of terrorist attacks from any possible direction. Thus it was not just the traditional *national security* that was further globalized, but *home security* as well. The US territory could no longer be defended at home. Law enforcement became a prominent part of US foreign policy. This meant that Washington considered the internal security of other states as part of its own security, and requested other states to integrate their anti-terrorist measures with the work of US agencies. This represents a globalisation of US governance, a further step on the way to a US-dominated global society.

The position of the United Nations remains significant. This global organization of states is built on the principle of equality for its member states, although five great powers have veto power in the Security Council. The United Nations represents the cumbersome multilateral road to global governance, which requires negotiations, treaties and agreements among a great number of states. The dominant politicians in the US Republican Party have long been sceptical to the United Nations organisation, which they consider to be ineffective and heavily bureaucratised. They also fear that it may restrain America's freedom of action, and even interfere in internal US affairs. However, after 11 September, the United Nations Secretary General as well as all the members of the UN Security Council (including Russia and China) went out of their way to support the US 'war on terror'. The UN sanctioned the American approach to the problem, including the bombing of Afghanistan. The reason for this support was not just that everyone agreed, but also that no one wanted to alienate a wounded giant. In order not to alienate the world's only superpower, and thus be politically marginalised, the United Nations Security Council as well as the General Secretary willingly provided global legitimacy to the new US concept of global security.

There can be no doubt that the US 'war on terror' is global in its reach, both rhetorically and practically. Thus both from Al-Qaeda's and the US perspective their war is conceived as trans-national and global. While one side refutes the existing state system and seeks to disrupt it and resurrect a historically defunct empire, the other wants to stabilise the existing state system by assigning all responsible states a participatory role in US-led efforts to enforce Washington's version of global security. There is thus a 'global civil war' going on between a trans-national insurrection movement and a hegemonic state who sees the security of the rest of the world as an extension of its own security.

All the above seems to indicate that the term 'global civil war' makes sense, but some valid counter-arguments exist.

### **Is this really 'war'?**

A first main objection to using the term 'global civil war' is that the US-Al-Qaeda conflict may not be a 'war' at all. While the antagonists describe their struggle as 'war', this may not be true in an analytical sense. Terrorists are trans-national criminals, not soldiers or even guerrilla fighters, and when President Bush speaks about 'war on terror', the term 'war' should be understood metaphorically as in the expression 'war on drugs'. This was suggested shortly after 11 September by several commentators, including the military historian Michael Howard who recommended that the US government disrupt Al-Qaeda through sustained, discreet and silent police work rather than a loudly military campaign.<sup>13</sup> Another analyst has later suggested that the US campaign to repress terrorist groups and prevent further terrorist actions should rather be seen as 'risk management' than war.

While this is an attractive proposition, it says more about what Bush ought to have done than what he actually did. Before 11 September, Bush lacked a clearly defined enemy. After 11 September he could focus US national security on the image of the dangerous terrorist, and gather his nation as well as most of the rest of the world, around his anti-terrorist campaign. He did it loudly, he did it as 'war' and he did it with success, but then he also ran the risk of transforming Osama bin Laden into a hero for future generations of anti-Americans, a symbol that global rebels can seek inspiration from during many years to come.

When both sides in a conflict understand what they are doing as 'war', use arms against each other, and cause the death of thousands, it seems difficult to categorise their interaction as something else than 'war'. The US-Al-Qaeda war will no doubt be listed as a war in the most commonly used databases. It also seems reasonable to conceive of the 11 September attack against New York and Washington and the bombing of Afghanistan in the following month as parts of the same war. Thus the war was not located in only the USA or only Afghanistan *but globally*, and the many arrests and incidents that took place in other parts of the world were also parts of that war. It seems therefore that the first counter-argument has been proven false. The next is more difficult to refute.

### **Is trans-national terrorism 'new'?**

Both sides seem to see Al-Qaeda as something new, a precursor of a phenomenon that is likely to characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is natural for Al-Qaeda to see itself this way. Any political movement will want to have a bright future, since this increases the participants' motivation and makes it easier to recruit new members. It is perhaps more surprising that the US government also emphasises the newness of Al-Qaeda, and ties it so strongly to the danger that terrorists may acquire weapons of mass destruction. 11 September did not as a matter of fact rely on any sophisticated technology. What made the spectacular attack possible was the dedication of a whole group of militants to accept death in a daring action. The tools used to hijack the civilian planes that crashed into the twin towers and the Pentagon were the simplest imaginable: box openers and razor blades it seems. Thus 11 September did not build on any new technology.

It is also not new that politically motivated violence is carried out by a trans-national movement. This happened also in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when anarchists killed the French President in 1894, the Austrian Empress in 1897, the Spanish Prime Minister in 1897, the Italian King in 1900 and the US President in 1901.<sup>14</sup> These killings, and the violent rhetoric of the anti-state anarchists, led to the adoption of draconian anti-anarchist laws in several countries, an international congress in 1898 and a multilateral treaty in 1904, aiming to establish cooperation among states in repressing international anarchism. Many expected the wave of anarchist terror to characterise the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, when the King of Serbia was assassinated in 1903, the King of Portugal in 1908, and Austrian archduke Ferdinand in 1914, the perpetrators were not anarchists, but disgruntled officers or nationalists. The formative event for the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe was not anarchist terrorism, but the international First World War.

Out of the First World War grew a new movement with the aim of overcoming national borders, defeating imperialism and establishing a just society worldwide. This movement was organized in the Communist International (Comintern), which

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Howard, 'What's In A Name?: How to Fight Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 1, January/February 2002, pp. 8-13.

was established with headquarters in Moscow in 1919. After failed city-based insurrections in some European nations in the aftermath of the First World War, agents of the Comintern waged a drawn-out struggle against the police forces of the European imperial powers, who cooperated in repressing communist movements both at home and in the colonies. This was a trans-national struggle, with a range of insurrectionary movements receiving training and sanctuaries in the Soviet Union, just as the Al-Qaeda did later in Afghanistan. However, the Comintern never really succeeded as a trans-national movement. It found it preferable to form independent communist parties for each nation, both in Europe and in the colonies, and the communist movement was only really successful in those countries where it managed to graft communist ideology onto basic nationalism. China and Vietnam (where communist parties remain in power today) are the prime examples. During the Second World War, the Comintern was dissolved, and international communism became a state-based block in world affairs rather than a trans-national insurrectionary movement. The Cold War 1947-89 took the form of a global conflict between blocks of states, not a global civil war. It was the dissolution of the socialist block and the US triumph in the Cold War that made the US the world's leading power, and thus also the prime target of any movement fighting the prospect of a unipolar world.

Although there is nothing new in having trans-national insurrectionary movements, the First, Second and Cold Wars characterised the 20<sup>th</sup> century to a much greater extent than those movements did. The question is now if Al-Qaeda will survive as a trans-national movement, if at all, and if other similar movements will emerge. Perhaps the US-al Qa'ida war is just an episode. Although both Al-Qaeda itself and the Bush administration in Washington consider themselves to be engaged in a long war, they could both be wrong. Al-Qaeda may not after all be the beginning of a new phenomenon, but could just as well be the last desperate attempt of some failed and marginalized Islamists to join forces and display a force they do not have. This is the perspective of Gilles Kepel in a book that was first published in French and later translated into English.<sup>15</sup> He analyses the failures of radical Islamism in Egypt,

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Laqueur, 'Postmodern Terrorism,' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 5, September/October 1996, pp. 24-36 (p. 24).

<sup>15</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Jihad. The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. Michael Scott Doran makes the same point in 'Somebody Else's Civil War,' *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81,

Pakistan and Algeria, the decline of Islamist fervour in Iran, the impossibility of escaping repression in Saudi-Arabia, and the frustration that Islamists from all these countries felt when only the peripheral states of Sudan and Afghanistan would give them sanctuary. The marginalised elements who joined up in Al-Qaeda do not represent the future, he claims, but the past.

Also ideologically, they are strongly attached to the past. As mentioned, they want to revive the Caliphate, and their hopes seem unrealistically based on the assumption that a sudden Islamic revival could occur in today's world in the same way that the faith spread from the Arabian peninsula to North Africa, Southeast Europe, Central, South and Southeast Asia in centuries long past. Today, however, the state system is probably too well entrenched to give way to the onslaught of a loosely organized army of Jihadis. The latest place where the Jihadi movement is getting into serious trouble with a national army is Pakistan.

The way the US-Al-Qaeda war will be remembered and classified will depend on future developments. If Al-Qaeda has been, or is being, so badly beaten by military operations, police work and financial controls that it fails to launch further attacks, if other insurgent groups who use terrorist methods remain mainly confined to national frameworks, and if terrorism again fades from its role as America's foremost enemy, then the Al-Qaeda-US war will probably be remembered mainly as an episode, like the wave of assassinations around 1900. If, however, Al-Qaeda is able to sustain itself and launch series of new attacks, if other trans-national groups of a similar kind emerge, or if the US is able to sustain the fear of international terrorism by playing on the memory of 9/11 and dramatising new dangers, then we are likely to be in a situation where the term 'global civil war' becomes more and more appropriate.

### **Implications for peace research**

The globalisation of violence through global civil wars is of course a nightmare scenario. What are the implications for peace research? What can be done to prevent it? Peace researchers, of course, cannot passively accept the emergence of global civil wars. They are dedicated to the pursuit of peace, and must look for counter-strategies

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No. 1, January/February 2002, p. 33: '... the attacks were a response to the failure of extremist



that prevent the globalisation of armed conflict and institute global mechanisms of conflict management. Anti-globalisation peace researchers will look for ways of resisting globalisation and defending local, national and regional societies. Pro-globalisation peace researchers will instead look for ways of instituting global governance peacefully through multilateral co-operation, and the gradual creation of a global civil society to which multilateral institutions can be accountable. While these are two alternative strategies, there is much that peace researchers can agree upon across the divide between proponents and opponents of 'globalisation'. In conclusion, the present article will make three suggestions.

The first is to consider the Al-Qaeda-US struggle as a real 'war', and thus make it a central concern. If it were to be considered simply as a case of international law enforcement, then it would probably fall outside the area of primary concern for peace research. There is good reason to take bin Laden and George W. Bush seriously when they consider themselves to be at war against each other. They have also both inflicted so much death and destruction on their enemies, and on innocent civilians, that it seems reasonable to consider them 'at war'.

The second is to draw on the methods and findings developed in research on traditional civil wars to analyse the global civil war. This means to investigate the driving forces behind Al-Qaeda's emergence and radicalisation, as well as the motivations behind the Clinton administration's muted and the Bush administration's dramatic response. It means furthermore to look into the main factors that could lead the war to endure, and the factors that could shorten it. In this connection it is important to discuss the respective roles of 'greed' and 'grievance' in the Al-Qaeda-US war. And light must be shed on how the war could be terminated in a way that would not leave sufficient grievance to allow a resurgence of trans-national Islamist warfare at the first convenience. This makes it necessary to address the larger question of how to create a global system of power that is sufficiently accountable and sensitive to popular needs to remove the need for launching global wars. This means seriously addressing the problem of marginalisation.

The third is to pursue the following more specific global counter-strategies, while continuously discussing the merit of each of them:

- Limit through international treaties and monitoring the spread of arms, both heavy and light, to insurgent groups as well as states.
- Prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and limit the number of states possessing them to the smallest possible number.
- Satisfy through relief efforts and economic reconstruction the basic economic, political and religious needs of the Muslim populations, so the basis for Al-Qaeda type movements is removed.
- Institute global reforms that remove the grievances that could legitimate the utilisation of terrorist methods by all kinds of insurgency movements.
- Preclude US unilateralism by instituting global mechanisms that the US cannot afford to ignore.
- Resist US-led globalisation by upholding the principle of national sovereignty, and defending cultural and political diversity.
- Encourage the utilisation of non-violent methods of struggle rather than suicide bombings and other terrorist actions, as a means to influence global and national civil societies.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century is considered to have been a particularly violent century, but it was also the century of such non-violent rebel leaders as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King.<sup>16</sup> Their non-violence was linked to visions of liberation from all kinds of repression. Gandhi was Hindu and Luther King a Christian, but their movements were not essentially religious. The ethnic and religious insurgencies that characterise the world today are of a particularly violent nature, and the inhuman method of suicide bombings is becoming more frequent. This trend must be turned around.

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<sup>16</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer's useful handbook in Gandhian conflict resolution from 1984 was recently republished in paperback: *The Gandhian Way. A Handbook in Conflict Resolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.