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Asymmetric Threats

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INTRODUCTION

The European Security Strategy adopted by the European Union on December 12, 2003 begins by saying: "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history" [1]. This optimistic view was abruptly shattered only three months later. On March 11, 2004, Spain suffered the most distressing and traumatic terrorist attack that has ever occurred in Europe. Between 7:37 and 7:40 a.m., ten coordinated bombings in the commuter train system of Madrid killed 192 persons and injured 1,840 more, many of them injured for life. Among the fatalities, no suicide bombers were found. On July 7, 2005, four Islamist terrorists perpetrated a coordinated suicide attack in the city of London. Four explosions, in three trains and on a double-decker bus, killed 52 citizens in addition to the four suicides, and injured 700. On August 10, 2006, a plot was discovered at London Heathrow airport. The suicide terrorists, acting as improvised explosive devices, allegedly were planning to detonate a series of liquid explosives bound to cause hundreds of casualties on board several planes destined for the United States.[2]

The European Security Strategy document also pointed out "Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, less visible and less predictable. […] Terrorism. Proliferation of WMD. Regional Conflicts. State Failure and Organised Crime"[3].

Asymmetric threats have traditionally referred to military actions or actions involving attacks to both military or/and civilian populations. Research by Primmerman (2006) established three different types of asymmetric threats: equipment (the use of unconventional or chemical or biological weapons), tactics (for example, suicide attacks and cyberattacks, etc), and strategy (sponsoring terrorist groups to perpetrate attacks)[4]. However, the evolution of events since the post-Cold War period has shaped a re-conceptualization of the asymmetric threat concept. Threats such as organized crime and Islamist terrorism, which transcend national borders, have inserted into poorly controlled structures that have proven too weak to combat them. At the same time, the complexities of international law conflict with national jurisdictions, making it difficult to apply countermeasures to reduce the scope of these asymmetric threats to international security.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze how the proliferation of WMDs, state failure, and regional conflicts, enhance and contribute, either directly or indirectly, to one of the most important asymmetric threats of the 21st century: terrorism.

1. PROLIFERATION OF WMDs AND THE CBRN LEGACY

The world today is not a safe place, but it is not as dangerous as it was during certain Cold War periods. Chemical, biological and nuclear (CBN) warfare was considered by several governments, which devoted part of their military budgets to make large investments in full-scale CBN offensive and defensive strategic programs.

From 1948 to 1991, international security was at risk with the shadow of nuclear war present at high tension moments such as the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). This threat led to the establishment of the Assured Mutual Destruction (AMD) policy, which prevented a confrontation between the United

States and the USSR. With the perspective of 50 years, we can assert that neither the USSR nor the United States would have launched a nuclear attack, because the first country to strike would have had a higher probability of being destroyed[5]. This confrontation would also have drawn their respective political allies into a massive destruction. In fact, the work at both NATO and the Warsaw Pact was intense during those years.

The necessity of controlling the non-proliferation of WMD, as well as their production, development and stockpiling, led to the establishment of an international law through several agreements. In 1970, the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force in the middle of an impressive nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. By 1967, the US had an arsenal of 31,233 nuclear warheads, and by 1986, the USSR had a historical record of 45,000 nuclear warheads[6]. India, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa did not join the NPT and North Korea announced its withdrawal effective on January 2003.

The NPT has not reached its objective of an effective nuclear disarmament by the parties who had nuclear weapons. This was partly owing to gaps in the original NPT document, which did not state an explicit mention of important issues, such as the enrichment of uranium for nuclear power plants which could then be used to obtain weapons-grade uranium (WGU). This point is still unresolved. After the war in Iraq in 1991 and the discovery of facilities for uranium enrichment at Al-Furat (an ultracentrifuge assembly plant), Al-Tarmiya and Ash-Sharkat (with calutrons and ultracentrifuge uranium enrichment)[7] in a country that had signed the NPT, an Additional Protocol for the NPT was introduced "to enable the IAEA inspectorate to provide assurance about declared and possible undeclared activities. Under the Protocol, the IAEA is granted expanded rights to access to information and sites"[8].

Although the Cold War is over and the potential for a major nuclear confrontation has diminished, the potential for the use of nuclear weapons is still a cause of apprehension. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC) stated in 2006 "the Commission has noted with concern the statements made by senior officials of a few states possessing nuclear weapons in which they suggest –some more explicitly than others- that their countries might one day use nuclear weapons in retaliation for terrorist attacks, aggression involving the use of other WMD or even certain attacks involving conventional weapons"[9].

In 1972, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, also known as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), entered into force. Although its mere existence was a catalyst for collective security, the BWC was not enough to prevent the proliferation of these weapons; first because some countries did not join the Convention, and second, because of the absence of a protocol to verify compliance with the terms. By September 2012, the BWC has 165 signatory states; 12 signatories have yet to ratify it, and 19 are non-signatory states[10].

Regarding chemical weapons (CWs), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction (CWC) was signed in 1993 because of the existing risk that these weapons could proliferate in politically unstable countries and fall into the hands of terrorists or irresponsible entities. The CWC was implemented in 1997 with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). According to the OPCW, Albania, India, Libya, the Russian Federation, the United States and other State Member officially announced the development of chemical weapons, which meant that 71,315 metric tonnes of CWs were stored.[11] According to the OPCW, all the existing CW stockpiles would have to be destroyed by 2012. Up to December 2011, a total of 51,504 MTs (72%) of the total declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed. Albania, India and a State Party have completed the destruction of their declared stockpiles. Iraq, Libya, the Russian Federation, and the United

States of America have yet to complete destruction. The Russian Federation and the United States have extended the deadline for eliminating their CW stockpiles to 2015 and 2021, respectively[12].

The post-Cold War period brought a change in global strategy. From 1949 to 1991, nuclear deterrence and containment shaped a *status quo* that predicted a rather foreseeable future. However, this balance disappeared and led to a new order in which former CBRN security patterns met new and critical challenges, such as nuclear proliferation in non-nuclear countries and non-state actors such as fundamentalist terrorist groups and transnational crime organizations. These challenges to international security established a new status in the policy of non proliferation in which international, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration are to play a definitive role to counteract the uncontrolled attempts to acquisition of CBRN agents or materials by means of smuggling, theft or black markets[13].

The final report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC) says: "Concerns over the physical security of nuclear weapons and fissile material have grown due to a number of developments. These include reports on the illicit trafficking in radioactive materials (including small amounts of fissile materials); chronic security problems at nuclear facilities in Russia and other former Soviet republics; claims that terrorist groups are seeking to acquire radioactive or fissile materials for nuclear weapons or so-called dirty bombs and worries, in the post-9/11 environment, of the possibility of terrorist attacks at civilian nuclear facilities"[14].

If the probability that a terrorist group could make an improvised nuclear device or crude nuclear bomb is small, a main concern comes from the potentiality that a terrorist group could perpetrate an attack with a radiological dispersion device, commonly known as *dirty bomb*[15]. After 1991, incidents related to illegal movements of radioisotopes led international organizations to establish databases to officially account for these incidents and to analyse their patterns of camouflage and geographical scope. In 1993, the World Customs Organization (WCO) launched a special enforcement program to detect radioactive material. In 1995, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) established an Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) with information provided by state members about the illegal acquisition, use, possession and trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials. This database reports incidents across borders, and incidents involving losses and the discovery of uncontrolled radioactive sources. By 2006 "about 54% [of the incidents] show evidence of criminal activity, such as theft, illegal possession and attempts to sell or smuggle nuclear or radioactive material across national borders" (Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and other Radioactive Material, 2007). From January 1993 to December 2011, a total of 2,164 confirmed incidents were reported to the IAEA by participating and some non-participating states[16]. However, the database does not contain the total number of actual incidents. This discrepancy results from various factors, including the fact that several countries are not IAEA party members and that some governments are reluctant to give a complete account of the cases because of national security concerns.

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies also have their own databases. In the case of Interpol, the Project Geiger collects own law enforcement data on illicit trafficking and information provided by other organizations and sources. (Interpol, Project Geiger Fact Sheet, 2007). Also Interpol's Operation Fail Safe acts as a counter nuclear trafficking initiative. Other institutions have their own reporting databases for nuclear and radioactive incidents. The Theft and Diversion Incident Analysis System (THADIAS) carried out by the US Argonne National Laboratory, contains 2,836 accounts in the period from 2002 to 2005. According to ANL research "Fortunately, most radiological cases involve small amounts of material but there are about 6-8 cases annually with particularly troubling circumstances".[17] Also in the United States, several centres have their own measures for reporting illegal nuclear and radioactive trafficking such as the NIS Nuclear Trafficking Abstracts Database (James Martin Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies, CNS) or the

Database on Nuclear Smuggling Theft, and Orphan Radiation Sources (DSTO, Stanford University).

Regarding nuclear and radioactive material smuggling in former Soviet facilities, Central Asian republics, namely Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, have been a matter of concern due to the difficulties involved in controlling the entirety of their border areas with the proximity of Afghanistan and the presence of terrorist groups in the area[18]. During the 1990s that saw a surge in radioactive materials smuggling, there were not significant incidents. As Sandstrom (2004) points out: "In the period 1993-2000, 25 incidents have been reported to occur in Central Asia. Twenty in Kazakhstan, one in Uzbekistan and two each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Most of them involving only small amounts of radioactive materials or radioactively contaminated scrap-metal".[19]

Apart from other measures such as bilateral agreements or funding programs for nuclear safety and security, Central Asian countries have strengthened counter proliferation efforts by means of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (CANWFZ). This Treaty entered into force on March 21, 2009 and implies the acceptance of enhanced IAEA safeguards.

Since September 11, 2001 efforts have aimed to improve the security related to radioactive materials and inhibit their trafficking. However, the implementation of these measures is not always an easy task. Indeed, and in spite of international agreements, initiatives and technical working groups, and the work of law enforcement officers, intelligence agencies and frontier controls, the nuclear smuggling network of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan in Pakistan operated for more than 20 years and provided an unknown number of components and materials for the nuclear programs of Iran, Libya and North Korea. The Khan network, discovered in 2003, employed several executives and outsourced a great deal of dealers and workers in ten countries along three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa that carried out thousands of trade transactions involving dual use technology. It is discouraging that it took 20 years to discover this critical contraband network.

2. STATE FAILURE: AN UNRESOLVED INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The term failed or fragile state is applied to those countries with specific features that are directly or indirectly destabilizing factors for national and international security. The World Bank refers to these countries as *Low Income Countries Under Stress* (LICUS), and they are not new in the international sphere. Sovereignty in these states is threatened by social, political and ethnic factors that in certain cases can lead to the segregation or rupture of the state unit.

Many of these LICUS present severe humanitarian problems, such as enormous poverty, endemic illnesses and a high rate of child and maternal mortality[20]. Other characteristics include the negative exploitation of natural resources, a lack of efficient security control at border areas, a lack of governmental control in large regions of the nation, and, in some cases, a corruption practice that undermine the authority of some of these states and leads to political destabilization.

Several countries on the African continent experienced gradual deterioration during the decade of the 1990s, with the outbreak of civil wars because of chronic, unresolved conflicts of ethnic, religious or political rivalry. Some of these conflicts remained latent and contained during the colonization period and exploded during the post-colonization years. Another reason for ongoing violence included exploitation by external interests to attain uncontrolled access to the rich natural resources of these countries, such as diamonds, gold and rare minerals. Research by Atanga points out "Africa averaged 7 high intensity conflicts annually from 1990-2000. […] Various armed and

rebel groups and government have funded these wars and financed their purchase of arms by illegally exploiting resources"[21].

The result of these confrontations, in addition to the high toll in human deaths and the devastation of infrastructures, was post-conflict humanitarian crises and armed violence in the hands of warlords, rebel groups in uncontrolled factions and ethnic militias, surrounding a suffering population. Another negative consequence of these confrontations was the huge number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, who usually live in precarious camps. "At the beginning of 2003, almost 35 million people -13 million refugees and 22 million internally displaced persons- remained uprooted by war and persecution world-wide. Small arms-related intimidation and insecurity are a key factor inhibiting sustainable repatriation or resettlement"[22].

During the 6th Global Strategic Review Conference, Mr. Robert B. Zoellick, President of the World Bank, said that these fragile states were the "toughest development challenge of our era. […] One billion people, including about 340 million of the world's extreme poor, are estimated to live in fragile states. […] The diseases, outflows of desperate people, criminality and terrorism than can spawn in the vacuum of fragile states can quickly become global threats". [23]

2.1. Transnational terrorism

Several analysts agree that terrorist organizations have found failed countries to be a good place to develop training, indoctrination, and recruitment practices, and they use these countries as safe havens for their operational structures. The counterargument is that terrorist organizations reject failed countries to establish their bases because "[terrorists] are actually more vulnerable to the policing efforts of third-party states […] the sovereignty and non-intervention norms are much weaker for failed states"[24].

Some regions of Africa are a focus for terrorism. The Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC, an offshoot of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)), the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and affiliated groups (such as the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (MICG), the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)), and the Somalian Al-Shabaab are an alarming reality and a threat to the national security of these countries in particular, and to Western countries in general. Research by Alexander (2011) illustrates that since September 11, 2001, 1,103 terrorist attacks have been perpetrated in the following Maghreb and Sahel countries: Algeria, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia. Most of these attacks, 938 cases, have occurred in Algeria[25].

For geographical, operative, tactical and strategic reasons, Spain has been and remains an attractive site for the settlement of radical groups and operative commands. Thus, the gradual penetration of Salafist nuclei are a cause of concern for Spanish security because they are composed by highly knotty networks. The EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report by Europol in 2010 stated that during 2009, 110 individuals related to Islamist terrorism were arrested, with the largest number of arrests in Spain and France. And in 2010, the number of arrested persons related to this type of terrorism was 179[26]. Also and after 30 years of a democratic regime, the terrorism of the Basque Marxist-separatist-nationalist ETA gang still constitutes an incomprehensible and painful terrorist threat in Spain.

After September 11, 2001, Spanish law enforcement officials accomplished several successful operations to dismantle jihadist cells, such as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. In these operations (Nova I, Nova II, Lago, Datil, Tigris, and Sello), leading jihadists were captured in several cities. Especially relevant were the 2001 arrest of Abu Dahdah, considered as Al-Qaeda's leader in Spain and the arrest of Mohamed Bensakhria, considered as one of Al-Qaeda's European

key-strategists. In April 2002, Ahmed Brahim, who was in charge of Al-Qaeda's finances in Spain, was apprehended in Barcelona. It was discovered that more than 700.000 Euros had been sent to the main network of Al-Qaeda through its Spanish financing structure[27].

Despite the fight against terrorism started in 2001, Al-Qaeda's tree is producing new branches: Al-Qaeda in Iraq (or Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers) (AQI), mainly composed of the former Iraqi group Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Owing to its origins in the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), AQIM attacks have mostly been perpetrated in Algerian territory by means of conventional bombs and ambushes. Kidnapping of Westerners for ransom is another practice carried out by AQIM members, although their targets are both military and civilian.

Counterterrorism efforts and strategies are being established in multidirectional ways. Agreements such as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PREACT) have been established in collaboration with Burundi, Comoros, Djibuti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.[28]

Through NATO's Defense Against Terrorism Program, Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) was established in 2001. The OAE is led by the Allied Forces Maritime Component Command HQ Naples (CC-MAR Naples) through the Maritime Operations Centre. Operation Active Endeavour is a naval mission that conducts counterterrorism by monitoring maritime traffic in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2010 the Emerging Security Challenges Division was created to broaden the scope of the Operation Active Endeavour.[29]

Critical energy infrastructures and energy supply routes that feed Western and the main Asian economies are located in vulnerable geographical zones. The Straits of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab and the Suez Canal are the only sea routes for transferring oil from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to the European Union, the United States and Asia. This zone of enormous strategic significance is permanently involved in political tensions because of conflicts in the Middle East. The other main oil export route, the Strait of Malacca, which links the Gulf Countries to Asian economies in India, China, South Korea and Japan, also represents a complex scenario because this Strait has historically been an area of piracy and armed robbery. These risks have led to littoral states authorities to the establishing of several anti-piracy and anti-maritime robbery initiatives (Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI, 2004); the Cargo Security Initiative (PSI, 2003), Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI, 2003), etc. As a result of these measures, the number of attacks have significantly decreased since 2005.

REGIONAL CONFLICTS AND POSTCONFLICTS TRANSCENDING FRONTIERS

Political, social and geographical derivations of regional conflicts are among the factors that can propagate terrorism, including the following main areas of conflict:

- The Middle East scenario with emerging conflicts.
- War in Afghanistan and the power vacuum in large areas of the country.
- The increasing instability of Pakistan.
- Territorial disputes in Kashmir between Pakistan and India, both nuclear powers, with the emergence of rebel groups.
- Internal conflicts in Central Asian republics related to radical Islamic groups with solid in-house capabilities.

The end of the communist system in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 generated large regional conflicts that substantially altered the status of global security. This new situation brought profound changes in the geographical, border and sociological configurations of the new countries. In Europe, the Yugoslavian federated and multiethnic system established in the 1980s after the death of Marshal Tito, disappeared after a series of wars from 1991 to 1995 that gave way to the establishment of new states.

The political, social and economic evolution of the Balkan region has been variable with some countries being more stable than others. Former Yugoslavian federations have expressed their willingness to join NATO, but only Croatia and Albania, which entered the Alliance in 2009, have met the necessary requirements. Serbia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace Program but Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, and Kosovo are still in the process of meeting NATO requirements to become full members of the Alliance.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991) generated major regional conflicts based on territorial issues existing before the Bolshevik revolution, forced Sovietization, ethnic tensions and national rebirths. These conflicts have created a Gordian knot, in terms of the politics and borders, and this problem has yet to be resolved satisfactorily for the states involved.

The Republic of Chechnya in the Northern Caucasus mountains declared its independence in 1991 and two wars with the Russian Federation followed. The first war was declared in 1994. It ended in 1996 after a cease-fire agreement with Chechen separatists. A second war in Chechnya started in 1999-2000. Although the number varies according to different sources, in 2002 local authorities claimed that the number of IDPs in Chechnya were over 200,000[30].

The confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the conflict over the Nagorno Karabaj territory began in 1988. A ceasefire by means of the Bishkek Protocol was signed in 1994. Although the number of IDPs during this war also varies, Hampton (2002) points out that the conflict in Azerbaijan resulted in an influx of 300,000 Armenians refugees between 1991-1994, and there was an estimated displacing of 450,000 to 500,000 Azeris[31].

Another important regional conflict occurred in the Republic of Georgia, in the South Caucasus region. Georgia declared its independence in 1991, and a convulsive period of civil conflicts began. To these civil conflicts was added the problem of military conflicts for territorial vindications with South Ossetia and Abkhazia and confrontations with Russia, which backed these two regions politically. Likewise, a short but intense struggle between Transnistrian forces and Moldovan forces between 1990 and 1992 ended with a ceasefire in 1992.

Former Soviet republics of Central Asia, namely Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, also suffered political and social fractures after the breakdown of Soviet structures. One aspect of this situation was a re-emergence of Islamic practice that in Central Asia has historically been based on the moderate religious practices of Sufi philosophy. However, the multifaceted turmoil after the dissolution of the Soviet institutions and the advance of Islamic extremism, especially in Afghanistan, led to various radical movements, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Although the group had difficulties operating in Uzbekistan, it was active in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. According to the UN Security Council Committee "IMU has close ties with Al-Qaida and the Taliban; senior IMU leaders have held positions in the Al-Qaida hierarchy[32]. It seems that presently, the number of IMU militants is about 500.

Population movement through repatriation and the massive wave of IDPs, as a consequence of the disappearance of the Soviet State was overwhelming. In May 1991, I was invited by the Soviet Academy of Sciences to attend the First International Sakharov Conference on Physics in Moscow.

Some months before I had also received an invitation from Professor Yuri T. Oganessian, Director of the Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna. In that Spring 1991 Soviet society was divided into conservative communist sectors; nationalist reformist sectors and a high number of persons that did not know what was going to happen, although everyone was very concerned about the drastic economy fluctuation. In December 1991, the USSR ceased to exist officially. I remember that events occurred so unexpectedly that none of my Russian friends or colleagues could foresee the turmoil that would change their lives in a few months.

The new tracing of frontiers and the creation of new states pushed millions of citizens out of their homes, producing movements of ethnic communities to their nominal states in the midst of a convulsive situation. Russians returning to Russia, Ingush fleeing from North Ossetia, Kazakhs returning to Kazakhstan, and several others found themselves in an urgent situation with their new nationalities. According to the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR), up to nine million people changed their place of residence because of political turmoil. From 1992 to 1996, approximately 3 million people emigrated from the Central Asia republics into Russia, but less than one million were officially registered[33]. In 1992, a war began in Tajikistan that lasted until 1993. As in other Soviet republics, the reasons were mainly based on political and ethnic (clan) grounds. During the Tajik conflict 500,000 to 600,000 people were internally displaced.[34]

The overwhelming number of internal displacements within former Soviet frontiers led to the celebration of the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, held in Geneva on 30-31 May 1996. The objectives of the conference were "to discuss population displacement and refugee problems in a humanitarian and non-political way; to review the population movements taking place in the CIS countries, clarifying the categories of concern; and to elaborate a non-binding Programme of Action for the CIS countries"[35].

A significant aspect of republics such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is that they have important hydrocarbon resources, oil and gas, and Kazakhstan is one of the main uranium producers in the world[36]. Because energy markets were the basis for their economic development, political and strategic security alliances have been established since the 1990s. In 1992, the Collective Security Treaty (CSTO) was signed. Its party members currently include the Republics of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation. In 2007, the CSTO adopted several decisions on military and economic cooperation and peacemaking.

In 1996, the Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions was signed in Shanghai by the presidents of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. One year later, they signed the Treaty on the Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions in Moscow. The evolution of this multilateral cooperation led to the signing of the Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), with Uzbekistan as a new party member. The SCO has a large scope of common interests for the development of projects on energy, communication, transportation, defense, etc. The projected pipeline from Kazakhstan to China would be one of the most important commercial aspects derived from SCO. The Russian Federation and China are also developing cooperative and technical assistance agreements to foster social and economical development in these Central Asian republics that continue to face several problems or political instability, such as Kyrgyzstan.

The GUUAM Group, consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova, was founded in 1997. Its objectives were to establish collaboration along a wide range of common interests. One of these interests is a willingness to collaborate with NATO within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO's Partnership for Peace program, which implies

collaboration in areas of energy issues, WMD non-proliferation and preventing the transferring of weapons to war zones[37].

In 1999 the Silk Road Strategy Act was launched by the United States government in order to provide a multidirectional assistance to the South Caucasus and Central Asia countries. According to the Act, this assistance will be prohibited for those countries that do not respect human rights or could manufacture WMD or support acts of international terrorism among others exceptions[38].

In 2000, the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) initiative was launched by President Vladimir Putin. The EAEC was joined by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan. The main objectives of the EAEC are the establishment of common markets, harmonization of douane tariffs, the creation of an energetic market and the development of common security guidelines to establish efficient border control for the detection of radioactive material.

The development parameters in Central Asian republics are specifically influenced by the war in Afghanistan, as a focus of instability. The war in Afghanistan and the unstable situation in Pakistan have been deterrents for Western commercial investments in the region, especially in the important hydrocarbon sectors. With respect to oil exports, an explosion occurred in 2008 near the Turkish Erzinkan province in the BTC pipeline, which covers 1,768 km from Baku (Azerbaijan), crossing Tbilisi (Georgia) and ending in the port of Ceyhan (Turkey). As a consequence of this, oil exports where suspended during two weeks. "After the BTC pipeline explosion, production from the ACG field was reduced from 850,000 bpd to 250,000 bpd. […] Experts estimate that likely loss of oil revenue through the month of August was around $1.9 billion"[39].

CONCLUSIONS

Issues such as the illegal trafficking of SALWs and MANPADs, the smuggling of CBRN agents and materials, regional conflicts and wars that prevent stability in their affected zones, criminal organizations that have become transnational and very powerful contribute to the spread of terrorism, as demonstrate by the growth of Al-Qaeda, a jihadist locally-based organization that has widely extended its network.

These powerful arguments explain why the current international situation requires reinforced multilateral efforts to address both symmetric and asymmetric threats to global security. As the EU Security Strategy (2003) says, "No single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own"[40].

NATO's Science for Peace and Security program is intended to develop capabilities to meet the increasing demands and challenges of the 21st century. NATO's Defense Against Terrorism (DAT) program is developing advanced tools to address the threat of terrorism in its most complex forms. The design of the program that was adopted in 2004 considers ten major areas, such as protection of critical infrastructure, detection and prevention of CBRN weapons, explosive ordnance proposals, defense against MANPADs, intelligence and protection of harbors and ships[41].

Critical moments for international security during Cold War periods, such as a nuclear, chemical or biological war appear as a distant spectrum. But the possibility that a terrorist group may use CBRN agents to perpetrate a tactical terrorist attack is a contemplated contingency in counter-terrorism programs of several nations and law enforcement agencies[42].

The globalized system that rules international relations requires that critical issues for international stability can be solved as soon as possible. It will be the only way to avoid an irreversible global deterioration that puts into danger international peace.

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