

Hostility, the nature of the enemy in the 21st century: a European vision

Xavier Raufer – September 2005

I would like to begin by thanking you for this invitation. When two countries, two continents, each possess part of the means for resolving a problem – in this case to diminish as much as possible the prevailing chaos, find solutions to the disorders of our world today – they must communicate with each other and explain their respective points of view, even if this is not always very easy.

By resolving the crisis of our world today, I mean that the United States has the necessary power and the capacity to unite other nations around it to do this, while Europe has unique experience in dealing with terrorism; even if terrorism, easily the most *visible* danger today, is not, in the longer term, the most serious threat to the future of human society.

We should not forget that all the known forms of modern terrorism, without exception (anarchist, revolutionary, nationalist, state terrorism, religious terrorism etc.) emerged originally in Europe, a continent which, since the 19th century, was also the first victim of these different forms of terrorism and continues to suffer from them.

If we take only Islamic terrorism (Shi'ite at that time), the first terrorist attack outside the Middle East was in Paris in December 1985 and injured 41 people. In France alone, between 1985 and 1996, some 17 Islamic terror attacks killed a total of 24 people and injured over 500.

Specialists, magistrates, intelligence officers and police forces in the major European countries therefore have a considerable weight of combined experience, gained over many years, in dealing with terrorism. This combined experience forms a body of thought that differs appreciably from what one reads and hears on your side of the Atlantic.

And it is crucial to have a body of thought when dealing with such a subject: it enables us to establish positions on solid ground before starting to build; it allows us to lay solid foundations, hammer out sound concepts and forge the necessary intellectual tools. What I would like to present to you here is an attempt to synthesize this body of thought and this experience.

However, before tackling this task, I would like to present myself and the place in which I teach.

In its current form, my university (Paris II) has been teaching law, in the main, since the Napoleonic era. In 1928, an Institute of Criminology was created upstream of the criminal law department of the university and I have been directing studies and research into terrorism and organized cross-border crime in this institute since 1987. I wrote my first book on terrorism in 1982. It predicted that France would be the next victim of the scourge and, alas, my hypothesis was not contradicted by events.

So much for my personal and professional background.

First of all, let us look at the "prior field of investigation"

I would first like to establish a framework for understanding the threats and dangers facing us today – terrorism of course, which is the most visible but not the only danger. In the face of a durably complex problem, a crucial first step is to elaborate what European classical philosophy calls “a prior field of investigation” before going on to make any direct observation of the phenomenon itself. Omitting this essential stage condemns us to short-termism, to looking through the wrong end of the telescope.

In the question of threats and dangers, our too-hurried society frequently ignores, sidelines or neglects *perspective*¹, the context in which a given event – a terrorist attack for instance - occurs. However, our understanding of the phenomenon depends on the “prior field of investigation” against which a given act takes place. Without access to it, durably effective action is impossible. When a man does not take into account this “prior field of investigation”, he falls prey to unconsidered activism – like a bull reacting instinctively to the red cloth. Action takes the place of thought: for such a person, practice precedes theory or even displaces it.

What is this “prior field of investigation” in which we can place every phenomenon, every situation that requires reflection? Let me use an image: you have first to understand what *time* is before you can understand the use of a watch, not its mechanism but its application, its end purpose. The concept of time as a dimension, as a measurable flow, is therefore the “prior field of investigation” that explains the watch and gives it meaning. The same is true for anything that has to be thought about.

For us, the “prior field of investigation” is expert knowledge of criminal and terrorist phenomena: attentive observation of their true essence, eliminating from this field all prejudices, illusions, outmoded intellectual representations, mirages, fantasies, fads and phobias which together make up the "accepted truths", the “unique thinking” of the information society. Identifying a fertile “prior field of investigation” means digging

¹ Etymologically, to look at something with respect to the future.

down to solid ground and using it to build up a solid bedplate of knowledge from which we can then construct our diagnosis.

Let us take a first concrete example: there is a great deal of talk throughout the world about the entity known as “Al-Qaeda”, but what is its real essence? Everyone knows that Ford is an industrial firm, the Democratic Party a political party and Citibank a bank – but what is Al-Qaeda? What framework should we use to contemplate this entity? This question must not be neglected or worse, considered as already known, since the success or failure of the subsequent repressive action depends on whether we answer it correctly or wrongly.

This example demonstrates the vital importance of the “prior field of investigation”, a field whose four sides are made up of the themes presented in this paper. We have formulated these themes as questions, since only by asking questions will we arrive at the crux of a problem. The first two themes have a negative tone, the second two a positive tone.

1°) USELESS: what is the point of a logic of compiling information faced with the real threats in the world today?

2°) FUTILE: is the salafi-jihadi current religious, stable and rational? Or is it political, protean and magical?

3°) PERTINENT: Do the major countries and coalitions in the world (NATO, the European Union, etc.) have a common vision of hostility?

4°) PROMISING: how to develop the capacity for early detection?

1°) USELESS: of what use is a logic of compilation faced with the real threats in the world today?

In our experience, it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to combat hostile terrorist or criminal entities today, outside the Western world properly speaking, by using a logic of compilation, that is to say, by compiling lists of individuals or organizations that must be captured, prevented from boarding airplanes or eliminated. In today's world, the enemy often has no fixed and definitive identity. Here, I will confine myself solely to Islamic terrorism.

In this context, what is the first step to be taken to neutralize the worldwide *jihadi* current? It is to *identify it*. Straight off, let us note that:

- Collecting information is not *thinking*: we cannot put together an effective strategy for combating terrorism or organized crime by simply collecting data (open or secret), even if it is then processed by computer.

This is because the basis for collecting this information – i.e. programming the computers – is not the *essence* of the entity being considered, but the prejudices of the programmers and the instructions they receive. Bold plans, sophisticated electronic systems, leading-edge investigative capacities are therefore useless if the thinking of the people devising or programming them is wrong or incorrect².

Hence, the "Echelon" network, said to be capable of intercepting millions of telephone calls, faxes and e-mails throughout the world every day, did not enable detection of the run-up to the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, simply because the keywords programmed into the system and triggering the alert were not adequate. In the phase of coalescence, when 12,000 to 15,000 Arab veterans battle-hardened by the Afghan jihad were creating their networks, the electronic devices did not pick up any firm indications that would have made it possible to stop the terrorists before they committed the September 2001 attacks. During this long preparatory phase, running from Bin Laden's declaration of war (August 23 1996) to 9/11 (that is, five years and one month, longer than the entire duration of the First World War), the huge electronic barrier that was supposed to protect the United States did not prove to be particularly useful. This point touches on a major problem, that of the ravages caused by the *attrition of everyday life* and *routine* in any enterprise of detection. I do not have the space to expand on this point here, but it is a problem that must be taken into account and understood as part of a perspective aimed at controlling threats and dangers in today's world.

- The next dimension is time. Watch-lists, aimed at informing the officials involved, are updated according to the data collected, in other words, according to current events. But what we call *current* always lags behind *reality*. By its very nature, the information is inoperative for anticipating events. For instance: in the everyday activity of human beings, no proactive operation is based on current events nor on what is reported by the media. Like traders at the stock exchange, when military personnel are called on to act in the field they need data that is genuinely "real-time", a point that demonstrates that *information* on the one hand and *real time* on the other have different chronological rhythms. From this standpoint, we can see how the paralyzing and inefficient logic of compilation inevitably puts the person practicing it into the situation of a tourist who plans a trip by consulting a guide that is already out of date.

² On this point, see: "US defense spending : the wrong road to force transformation", Anthony Cordesman, The Financial Times, 18 February 2005.

Today, the United States is fighting two wars on the planetary scale: the "war on drugs" and the "war on terror". In both these cases, the first stage of any action is to compile watch-lists of rogue states and specific individuals and groups. The lists then tend to proliferate: at the end of 2004, they contained the names of any individual active in a U.S. airport, whatever his or her job or the place in question, and any person (crew or passenger) participating in a cruise. What's more, the US diplomatic service asks the rest of the world to compile lists of the entities and individuals that it considers dangerous or hostile³.

The American repressive or military machine then undertakes to track the entities and individuals thus identified. However, whereas most terrorists operating during the cold war had fixed and stable identities, whereas the terrorist groups of the time were durable and "on the human scale", this is no longer the case today. Have we not simply prolonged the curves without due consideration? Have we not neglected *thinking about* the conditions of the war on terror or crime in a volatile and nebulous world, where *identity cards* are unknown – and probably impossible to introduce, given the current state of the world? But the machines continue to compile lists:

- of fluid, protean, mutating, hybrid, kaleidoscopic – even headless – entities

- and of individuals who today emerge from traditional, pre-modern, clan-based or tribal societies, and whose identity is one of filiation or affiliation, elusive, fuzzy and variable: *individual*, true, but in no way *personal*. For instance: Ali bin-Muhammad al-Bagdadi, Ali son of Mohammed from Baghdad.

Likewise for the entities or groupings in the sphere of Islamic terrorism. Here, for example, are a few generic names (i.e. "automobile" rather than "Ford") that are found frequently among both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims and which do not refer to any specific structure:

Jihad al-islami : Islamic jihad - *Hizb Allah*: Party of God - *Jamiat Islamiya*: (or *Jama'a*, *Gamaa*, *Jemaah*, variations due to pronunciation or transcription) Islamic association - *Ansar al-Islam*: companions (of the Prophet) of Islam - *Jund Allah*: soldiers of God - *Jund al-Islam*: soldiers of Islam - *Jaish-i-Muhammad*: army of Mohammed - *Jaish al-Islam*: Army of Islam - *Takfir wa'l Hijra*: anathema and Hegira - *Tawhid*: unity, absolute monotheism.

³ Conversely, drawing up lists of individuals to be challenged and groups to be outlawed is standard practice at the repressive stage, very much downstream of the phase of defining an anti-terrorist or anti-crime strategy.

The fact that they still appear in the watch-lists shows undeniably, in any case, that the American repressive or military machine assumes that the identity of the entities or individuals that they are tracking in today's world are stable, durable and therefore *exploitable*, that it believes them to have a permanent name or a fixed identity, as is the case in Western society.

Hence, the logic of compilation assumes to be known and identified, once and for all, individuals or entities that are, on the contrary, mobile and mutating. The whole conception underlying this logic is mechanical and fixed – it prevents an open-ended, *biological* approach (cells, emergence, transformation,...) to *living* entities and groupings in the sphere of Islamic terrorism, i.e. identifying what is constant, detecting stable sequences in a chaotic environment, understanding the behavioral and temporal dimension of these entities; what these individuals and entities tend to do habitually and most frequently, at what time or period; what they never do, etc..

2°) FUTILE: is the salafi-jihadi current religious, stable and rational? Or is it political, protean and magical?

In the chaotic situation emerging from the abolition of the bi-polar world order, the -- for the moment -- dominant form of confrontation opposes the world superpower surrounded by a coalition of variable geometry to a hard core of a few thousand deterritorialized fanatics. These fanatics are convinced of their metaphysical legitimacy, of acting to defend themselves from aggression – and therefore that their cause is just. They see the USA's attitude in Palestine or in Iraq as a real *casus belli*, a cause for making war.

What role does the religious dimension of the phenomenon, Islam, play in all this? This is where we can talk of futility: back in the middle of the 20th century, European political scientists (notably the publicist and political theorist Carl Schmitt) determined that any grouping, even one of religious origin, became political and polemical when it operated in the perspective of a major confrontation between terrestrial powers. Likewise, what the American administration calls "Al-Qaeda" is simply a political-military entity covered with a veneer of religion; true, it is wrapped in an Islamic packaging but the *essence* of this entity is political.

I quote Carl Schmitt: "A religious community, a church, can ask a member of the faithful to die for his faith, to undergo martyrdom, but in order to achieve his own salvation only, and not for his religious community as an organized power in this world; otherwise, this religious community becomes a political organism; its holy wars and its crusades are, like other wars, enterprises founded on a decision of hostility". (*Le Nomos de la Terre*, PUF-Léviathan, 2001).

While the political nature of the salafi-jihadi current is evident, the behavior, culture and *modus operandi* of this current still seems to be poorly understood by those who are combating it, from Afghanistan to Iraq. Too often, indeed, this current is seen as our reverse image, we see it as we would like it to be. However, it is neither rational nor stable; its intellectual landscape, unlike our own, is not at all influenced by the culture of management or marketing; quite the reverse, it is protean and magical. Let me give a few concrete examples.

To start with, let me give an example of the ignorance of some American officials about the mental universe of salafists, just one year after 9/11. On September 11 2002, America was on the alert. Commercial flights were empty. The army, the National Guard, the navy, the air force, the police and intelligence services were on maximum alert as relayed by all the media. Would Bin Laden strike on the anniversary of the previous attack? Note that when he talks about 9/11, he calls it the "blessed day" (*yom al-moubarak*) without any reference to the actual date. Is this accidental? No: for a salafist from the Arabian peninsular, the very idea of date is not very meaningful. In traditional Bedouin culture, time exists of course, people have watches – but the very concept of time is quite different from what it is in Christian countries. Fixed feast days, one saint per day: the life of the Christian is encapsulated entirely in a fixed calendar. To put it briefly: in opposition to Western time, which is linear, quantitative and always driven by urgency and just-in-time, there is traditional time, which is cyclical and reversible, whose horizon is that of divinity; a time without urgency and – indeed quite the reverse -- impregnated with patience. In the traditional time of the Muslims, the calendar is lunar and mobile: the month of Ramadan changes every year. In the Arabian peninsular, from where 19 of the 9/11 terrorists came, anniversaries are *never* celebrated, neither the birthdays of parents or children, nor the anniversaries of weddings or other important events. The salafists even believe it is heresy to celebrate the anniversary of the Prophet, although other Islamic religious currents do celebrate it.

But let us go further: when official America and its big networks talk about "Al-Qaeda" or the Iraqi insurgents, they depict a stable, recognizable and identified enemy. An organization, a chief, an objective. The *jihadi* current is presented as having an I.R.A.-type organization, with an "Army council", a general staff, and Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi in the role of Officer-in-Command (O. C.) of the Baghdad Brigade.

However, the jihadi current is anything but stable and rational. It is changeable, intermittent, chameleon-like. Even if Wahhabis and Salafists reject their Sufi heritage, a thousand years of secret or esoteric practices, invisible brotherhoods and unbreakable initiatory paths (*tariqas*) have given these activists a strong taste for conspiracy, stealth and hiding their traces. In central Asia and the Caucasus, even Stalin's secret police

never managed to dismember the *tariqas*, which emerged intact around 1990 after seven decades of state atheism, of *gulag*, torture and summary executions. And let us not forget that Ayman al-Zawahiri was an important Sufi sheik in his native Egypt.

Let us set the *tone* for the following remarks. I refer to a player in the Afghan islamic-tribal chaos, the Pashtun battle chieftain (from the Ghilzai tribe), Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He could claim the title of champion all categories combined in the Guinness Book of Records. From June 1993 to June 1994, Hekmatyar was Prime Minister in Kabul. But, *at the same time, his own* militia, the Hizb e-Islami, allied to the Hizb e-Wahdat of another warlord, Abdulrachid Dostom (chief of the Uzbeks of Afghanistan), was besieging and bombarding... Kabul, seat of a government led by Hekmatyar himself. And Hekmatyar's incredible double-dealing in 1994 is not an isolated case in the region.

- From uncompromising Marxism-Leninism to the Taliban... ⁴

In 1992, Shah Massoud seized Kabul. The Afghan communist regime collapsed and Mohammed Najibullah went to ground. But what became then of the Pashtun generals of the former Afghan Red Army and the Afghan KGB, the KHAD, whether the *Khalk* fraction (pro-Chinese communist) or the *Parcham* wing (pro-Soviet)? From 1990 to 1992, these uncompromising Marxist-Leninists simply transferred their services to the definitely Salafist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar... after growing their beards. Basically, they are all Pashtuns and in tough times, tribal brotherhood is a certitude – more certain even than a religion with which Westerners are often obsessed ⁵. Some examples:

- Erstwhile commander-in-chief of the artillery of the Afghan Red Army, the general Shahnawaz Tanaï ended up alongside Hekmatyar in 1990 – and in 1995, fighting with the Taliban.

- The Taliban chief "Mullah Borjan" (now dead) is in fact the former communist general Turan Abdurrahman.

- The heads of the Taliban intelligence service, Shah Sawar and Mohammed Akbar are former dignitaries, respectively, of the Afghan Red Army military intelligence service and the KHAD.

⁴ On this point, see the interesting study on the "Turkistan Bülteni", 19/12/2001, by the Finnish researcher Anssi Kristian Kullberg, a renowned expert on Central Asia and Afghanistan.

⁵ This tribal reality also explains the support given, when humanly possible, to the Taliban by the Pakistani regime: in and around 2000, some 16 million "indigenous" Pashtuns were living in Pakistan, originally in the North-west border region, then joined by over 3 million refugee Afghan Pashtuns – in other words, there were more Pashtuns in Pakistan than in Afghanistan itself!

- Mohammad Gilani, general in chief of the Taliban "air force", also came over from the Communist army.

From October 1991 to today, the mission of tracking Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar was entrusted to similar chameleons... Or these very same ones, with the success that is evident to us all.

- From uncompromising *salafiya* to doing business... with the enemy ⁶

From 1996 to autumn 2001, the Taliban controlled 90% of Afghanistan. Only two enclaves in the north of the country were outside their control, one peopled by the Uzbeks and the other by the Tajiks, partners in the shaky Northern Alliance. The Tajik redoubt was in the Valley of Panshir, protected by high mountains breached only by a few gorges. The "bad" Taliban blockaded the "good" Tajiks, whose battle chieftain was Shah Massoud, the favorite icon of the Western press – with both sides apparently fighting a merciless war. However, throughout the entire "blockade", the Taliban themselves supplied the Valley of Panshir through daily caravans of hundreds, even thousands, of donkeys, loaded with food, fuel, commodities and spare parts. All the witnesses are categorical: it was neither a local initiative nor a traffic carried out unbeknownst to the heads of the blockade, nor even a case of turning a blind eye: it was a sophisticated *system*. Each donkey was taxed 10 US dollars for each "round trip". At the Giobah pass alone, one witness saw 500 donkeys file through in a single caravan. The volume of business was so great that this admiring witness describes the Taliban as "business-friendly" ...

To summarize. On Western criteria, at one end of the chain we have the "baddies", on the other the "goodies". And journalists regale us with accounts of the fanaticism and ferocity of the first and the moderation and modernity of the second. However, behind the scenes, the "goodies" and the "baddies" share the profits from their traffic. And the money paid to the Northern Alliance ends up in part – unbeknownst of course to naïve supporters and backers – in the pockets of Mullah Omar and Bin Laden's "Arab-Afghans". But are these schemes of any importance? Very much so! The proof was given without delay: in October 2001, when the USA launched its attack on Afghanistan and entrusted the task of capturing Bin Laden, Mullah Omar and the Taliban and "Al Qaeda" leadership to the Northern Alliance "freedom fighters", the hunt was a complete failure. But why should we be surprised? Does one "give up" an associate, an accomplice?

⁶ See "In conquered Kabul", Tim Judah, New York Review of Books, 20/12/2001.

Let us now move on to the positive points, which will be mentioned more briefly – after all, it takes less time to announce good news than bad news.

3°) APPOSITE: Do the world's major countries and coalitions (NATO, the European Union etc.) have a common vision of hostility?

However vague or fuzzy, the world's major countries and coalitions do have a common vision of the real dangers of the modern world, those that really threaten us today. This is the good news. Let us look at four important texts, all published between 1999 and 2003. Together, they form the basis for our thinking around this subject:

- The strategic concept of the Atlantic alliance (1999)
- The final communiqué of the Prague summit (NATO, 2002)
- National Security Strategy (USA, 2002)
- European security strategy (European Union, 2003).

All these texts highlight the same prevailing threats: terrorism – proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – regional conflicts – failing states – organized crime. They all say more or less the same thing as this excerpt from the “European security strategy”:
"The combination of all these elements, a terrorism firmly resolved to use maximum violence, access to weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, the weakening of the state system and the privatization of force, could expose us to an extremely serious threat”.

How can we build on this common foundation – which is realistic but vague? How can we take it further? How can we be more precise? In the time allotted, I will confine myself to sketching in two conceptual avenues of research:

- Firm advocates of the market economy and believers in happy globalization see the terrorist or criminal manifestations of the modern world as insignificant pieces of grit jamming the motor or as minor breakdowns, hitches, annoying but unimportant incidental malfunctions. We, conversely, believe that these terrorist-criminal manifestations of world chaos will, if we ignore them, lead to an international anarchy that will paralyze the world economy. Must we remind ourselves that oil was around 20 dollars a barrel at the time of 9/11, and that it has tripled since? And consider the big international criminal organizations, a threat that is obscured by terrorism but one that is increasingly serious. Just one figure significant to us Europeans: the amount of heroin smuggled into Western Europe along the “Balkan route” has risen from 2 to 3 metric tons a month in 2001 to 8 to 10 tons a month by the end of 2004.

- We must consider as a whole the present and emerging threats in the real world. The political-media practice of the sound bite chops the vast and complex reality of crime

into separate little chunks; it dooms us to looking through the wrong end of the telescope. Focusing solely on terrorism, for instance, within this chaotic criminal magma, condemns us to understanding nothing at all about it. On the contrary, we must look at and think about the terrorism-organized crime continuum together; we must not separate aspects of the same thing. All our observations conclude that there is a real phenomenon of communicating vessels between the different players in this world chaos, that these players:

- have common *harmonies*
- frequent common lands and *territories*
- have a common (submerged) *economy*
- offer real opportunities for symbiosis, despite having different biological systems.

Therefore, to use a concept described above, these threats must be thought about together, from the vantage point of the same “prior field of investigation”. Only in this way will we be able to move out of the culture of reaction, retrospect, and compilation. Only in this way can we arrive at the stage of forward thinking, early detection of the threats and dangers of the modern world, the last point that I will now address.

4°) PROMISING: how to acquire the capacity for early detection?

Our research department has been working for several years on the capacity to detect potentially dangerous entities or activities as early as possible, well upstream of electronic and even human intelligence gathering, with the idea of more accurately directing intelligence activities, bringing it to bear earlier on interesting targets. This work of detection is almost purely conceptual, it does not require enormous material means and yet it considerably “sharpen” the senses of intelligence operators by alerting and informing them. In the time allotted, it is not possible for me to go into detail; I will therefore content myself with outlining the principles and main directions of our working method.

Early detection of the real dangers in today’s world is a little like preventive medicine. It provides the capacity:

- first, to identify, and then eliminate superficial appearances, i.e. gain access to what is real
- secondly, to make a rapid and effective diagnosis
- finally, to act early, with accuracy and authority.

Where to detect? What to detect and how? In this world chaos, a multinational company or a state is like a jeep on an unmade road, careering along a rocky path with unpredictable twists and turns. Where is the sensitive point? A well-known American expression is *where the rubber meets the road*. This is the point that controls the trajectory, the

point at which the jeep holds to the road and avoids overturning. For a state or a multinational, the crucial exchange, the extreme danger is also located *where the rubber meets the road*. That is where we have to be, that one millisecond before that has to be foreseen, where we must straighten up the wheel and avoid the obstacle. And it all has to be a reflex, if not the jeep rolls, or worse. This is why early detection is useful, this is its purpose.

Early detection is therefore an original *proceeding* – a decision to take a certain path. In a chaotic world in which attack is unexpected and the adversary impalpable, early detection of threats means seeking illumination, not behind us (in the past) but ahead of us (in the future), since “at dawn, we see by the light of the day that is yet to come”⁷. Early detection is expert observation grounded in the future of the bud, not the adult tree.

In a chaotic space, what is late, hindsight, have already lost. Prolonging curves is ineffectual. In such a world, winning necessarily means *forestalling events*. We must decide, not based on the past, but *for what is to come*. For us European experts and academics working in the field of geopolitics and criminology, this policy of early detection of the threats emerging from the prevailing world chaos is our final objective: to provide political leaders and media experts with presentations of defense and security, with the conceptual means to perceive and subsequently diminish the chaos, according to a logic of “limitation-consolidation-stabilization”.

In conclusion: in the matter of threats, can the information society still produce serious diagnoses, or is it condemned to bluster?

We experts in the threats and dangers of today’s world, on either side of the Atlantic, are not working in a vacuum. We live in a society whose major characteristics – let us not hide our heads in the sand – are not particularly conducive to performing our tasks.

Look around yourself, spend an hour in front of the television: our society is unstable, superficial, concerned primarily by impulsive and immediate satisfaction of its desires. This impatient, pressure-cooker society is prisoner of an eternal present, prisoner of short-sightedness, chronic urgency, hurry, just-in-time, continual flight. A society in which crowds tend to act like shoals of fish.

Such a society is vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation. It is on this last point, a cause of concern to all experts, that I would like to conclude, here again in the form of a

⁷ See preface to "Qu'appelle-t-on penser?", Martin Heidegger, PUF-Quadrige, 1951.

question addressed to all real experts in security and defense. What is our real weight, in a society that is so permeable to media shibboleths, so easily fascinated by pied pipers?

As a warning to our own French politicians, an eminent French economist, Nobel Prize-winner for economics, declared a few years back: “there is a form of fraud that is rarely denounced, which consists, for official circles, of deliberately concealing facts likely to challenge established truths and opposing their publication... there are not, there cannot be any other criteria of the truth of a theory than its more or less perfect agreement with concrete phenomena”⁸.

However since then, this bad habit of concealing or deforming the facts has actually spread, on both sides of the Atlantic. If we take, in particular, the Global War on Terror », and the build-up to the Iraq war – and I say this in a spirit of friendship, since true friends owe each other honesty – we observe that many of the initial revelations, and even the most sensational, were later shown to be unfounded and even fictitious, perhaps even deliberately fictitious.

So, what can the expert do in a world dominated by bluster, media hype, sweeping and unsupported assertions, personal attacks and slanderous campaigns against those who contradict the official thinking? Not a great deal. And these nefarious practices are not limited to the field of security and defense but now also contaminate all the fields in which man communicates. I have found a chemically pure case of these harmful practices in the field of economics and finance. I intend to present it here as a conclusion, with the hope of making such media "attacks" on reality more difficult in the future.

In September 1999, a long study was published in "The Atlantic Monthly" entitled – not as a question or a hypothesis but as an affirmative and definite fact – "Dow 36 000". This study, written by James K. Glassman and Kevin A. Hassett of the "American Enterprise Institute", claimed to demonstrate that the New York Stock Exchange was heading inexorably towards 36 000 points. It would be cruel to point out what happened shortly after this study was published or remind ourselves of the present level of the New York Stock Exchange even today. What is significant in this case is the method employed at the time, and subsequently used in an absolutely identical way for the “Global War On Terror” and the Iraq war.

According to the authors of "Dow 36 000", the world had entered a new and even unprecedented paradigm. Those who did not perceive this new paradigm were, without exaggeration, stupid or completely out-of-touch. Wall Street analysts, editorialists in the economic and financial press were all wrong. These experts, albeit renowned, were

⁸ Professor Maurice Allais "Réflexions sur les vérités établies", Le Figaro, 27/04/1999.

"short-sighted", suffering from "tunnel vision"; their systems of calculation and their concepts were "anachronistic" and "profoundly mistaken". Whereas, on the contrary, the authors of the study were proposing "simple", "modest" and "circumspect" solutions; their remarks and proposals were "evident" and based on "historically proven facts".

An avalanche of complex figures and sophisticated statistics, numerous references to great economists and renowned academics, a prophetic tone, the claim to possess a new analytical framework that consigned the "old economy" and "outdated models" to the dustbin; the slanderous attacks on those who did not share the views of the authors of the study: all this in fact concealed the same old trick:

- There is a hidden treasure (wealth, or peace and democracy in the Middle East)

- We possess the secret; we know how to find where the treasure is hidden. Trust us.

Faced with this wave of propaganda, what weight was accorded at the time to the measured and circumspect opinions of real experts? Very little – at least not until the reality became evident, as it always does in the end.

We live in a world where fraudulently tampering with an analysis is always liable to serious criminal proceedings, in medicine for example, where such tampering may concern the life of a single man. However, in the political or media field, where the falsification concerns millions of individuals, no such response is made. And the first victims of this propaganda and hype are the real experts, which the media tornado chases from the centers of power (political and media) both in the case of the "new economy" and that of the "Global War On Terror" and the Iraq war.

The fact that under political-media pressure, charlatans or liars take the place of the genuine experts is one of the serious problems facing the developed world today. The consequences of this situation are serious today; they will be even more serious tomorrow if the situation persists. I am happy to have had the opportunity to expand on this issue before you today and to issue this warning about a situation that greatly preoccupies my colleagues and myself. Thank you again for your invitation.

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For more information (part of it in English):

www.drmcc.org - website of the Department for the Study of the Contemporary Criminal Menace, University of Paris II.

www.xavier-raufer.com - the author's website: bibliography, articles, etc.

Appendix

Islamist terror attacks in France, 1985-1996 (*in which people were killed or injured*)

1985-86 – Islamic-revolutionary attacks, Lebanese Shi'ites and Islamic Iran.

December 1985

Bombs in two Paris department stores, 41 injured

February 1986

(3 February) Bomb in a shopping gallery in Paris 8th arrondissement, 8 injured

(4 -) Bomb in a bookshop, Paris 5th arrondissement, 3 injured

(5 -) Bomb in a shopping center, Paris 1st arrondissement, 9 injured.

March 1986

(17 March) Bomb in a Paris-Lyon train, 10 injured,

(20 -) Bomb in a shopping gallery in Paris 8th arrondissement, 2 dead, 28 injured.

September 1986

(8 September) Bomb at the Paris Town Hall, 1 dead, 19 injured

(12 -) Bomb in a Paris suburban supermarket, 41 injured

(14 -) Bomb in a café in Paris 8th arrondissement, 2 dead, 1 injured

(15 -) Préfecture de Police, Paris 4th arrondissement, 1 dead, 51 injured

(17 -) Bomb in a department store, Paris 6th arrondissement, 6 dead, 16 injured.

1996-96 – Salafi-jihadi terror attacks, Algerian Armed Islamic Group.

July 1995

Bomb in an RER (Paris regional network) train, Paris 5th arrdt., 7 dead, 84 injured.

August 1995

Bomb at the Place de l'Etoile, Paris 8th arrondissement, 17 injured.

September 1995

Bomb in a street market, Paris 11th arrondissement, 4 injured,

Bomb in a school in Villeurbanne, Rhône, 14 injured.

October 1995

Bomb in the metro in Paris, 13th arrondissement, 29 injured.

December 1996

Bomb in the RER in Paris, 13th arrondissement, 4 dead, 128 injured.