

# Contending cultures of counterterrorism: transatlantic divergence or convergence?

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The July 2005 terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom have refocused attention on the threat from Islamic extremists. Parallels have been drawn with the attacks on Madrid in 2004 and the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Yet the attacks also underline the differing circumstances and responses that characterize the experiences of Europe on the one hand, and the United States on the other. This article elucidates these differences and seeks to place them within the broader context of historically determined strategic cultures.

The attacks occurred in a very different context in the UK and Spain to those in the United States. The two European countries have long experience of fighting a serious domestic terrorist menace, while the US had no such history. The presence of sizeable Muslim populations at home was a factor in the European attacks, again in contrast to the United States. Prior to 2003, most European countries were seen as indifferent supporters of American policy in the Middle East and were not identified by Islamists as main sources of aggression against Muslims around the world.

The responses to the attacks illustrated the remarkable gulf in strategic culture between the two sides of the Atlantic. The US declared a 'global war on terrorism' and directed the full resources of a 'national security' approach towards the threat posed by a 'new terrorism'. Overseas policy has been shaped by the identification of a nexus linking international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WDM) and 'states of concern'. At home the US has undertaken major changes to its governmental structure, tightened controls at points of entry into the country, granted greater powers to its law enforcement officers and courts, and overhauled its intelligence and security agencies.

In contrast, Europe has conceived the problem differently. It has conceptualized radical Islam in less absolute terms, and accordingly its approach to

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counterterrorism has emphasized 'regional multilateralism' rather than 'global unilateralism'. European countries' military forces have attempted to encourage peacekeeping, reconstruction and security sector reform as well as partaking in gruelling counterinsurgency operations. Their foreign policies have continued to emphasize the containment of risk, consensus-building and balance of power. Domestically, legal changes relating to surveillance and civil rights have been less sweeping, while the enhancements to internal security architecture have been more modest. Underpinning this different approach is not only a European desire to draw on some of the lessons from decades of counterterrorism, but also a growing conviction that the 'newness' of the threat posed by Al-Qaeda has been exaggerated. The implications of these divergent cultures for the future of the relationship between Europe and the United States are enormous.

Since the spring of 2005 there has been evidence that the US is moving closer to the European position by adopting a new strategy of counterterrorism and seeking greater multilateral engagement. In March, the National Security Council (NSC) began a review of US national policy designed to address a more 'diffuse' terrorism, and a new national security presidential decision directive on counterterrorism is expected before the end of the year.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Pentagon adopted a new strategic plan that emphasized non-military instruments and more cooperation with allies.<sup>2</sup> In bureaucratic terms, the arrival of Condoleezza Rice at the State Department has had a catalytic effect, accelerating this change. To what extent do these developments presage a more convergent transatlantic approach to international terrorism? This article suggests that while strategic doctrines may change, the less mutable nature of strategic culture will make convergence difficult. Moreover, while some officials have begun to identify the shape of current problems more accurately, their elusive nature means that neither Europe nor America yet has convincing answers.

## Strategic cultures

'Strategic culture' remains an ill-defined and under-used concept. Its use must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of its limitations, accepting that even among political sociologists, ideas such as 'culture' remain contested.<sup>3</sup> Strategic culture is based on the understanding that states are predisposed by their historical experiences, political systems and cultures to deal with security issues in a particular way. Other factors, such as its level of technological development, may influence a state's strategic choices, but its preferences will be shaped most strongly by its past. These institutional memories will help to determine

<sup>1</sup> Susan B. Glasser, 'Review may shift terror policies', *Washington Post*, 29 May 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The Pentagon document finalized in March was entitled the 'National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism'; see Linda Robinson, 'Plan of attack: the Pentagon has a secret new strategy for taking on terrorists—and taking them down', *US News and World Report*, 1 Aug. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian Pye, 'Culture and political science: problems in the evaluation of the concept of political culture', *Social Science Quarterly* 53, 1972, pp. 285–96.

how threats are perceived as well as conditioning the likely responses.<sup>4</sup> Officials quickly absorb the unspoken norms associated with a strategic culture, which may be as important in ruling out policy options deemed ‘inappropriate’ as they are in determining the precise nature of paths taken.<sup>5</sup>

The idea of a strategic culture or strategic personality has been most closely connected with defence issues and above with all war-fighting problems.<sup>6</sup> Caroline Ziemke, one of the first to make use of this approach, has suggested that it is about a state’s self-conception, mediated though the historical experience of its past conflicts. Historical experience and strategic culture are often connected though a process of reasoning by analogy. Decision-makers tend to focus strongly on the commanding heights of their past strategic experience, navigating in terms of major episodes which are regarded as successes or failures.<sup>7</sup> These seminal experiences have burned themselves deeply into the national psyche and have significant unconscious meaning.<sup>8</sup> Munich and Suez, more recently Vietnam and Somalia—perhaps soon Afghanistan and Iraq—are all examples of what Dan Reiter has called the ‘weight of the shadow of the past’.<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult to apply the concept of strategic culture to international terrorism because the latter phenomenon crosses a number of established boundaries. First, international terrorism blurs the boundaries between external security and internal security: the perpetrators may originate abroad but commit acts of violence against citizens in the homelands of their targets. Second, state responses are likely to be mixed, ranging from the use of force against the sources of terrorism to increasing internal security measures such as law enforcement and judicial action.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the classical literature on counterterrorism does identify, at least in outline, typologies of state response to terrorism. Traditional ways of addressing terrorism might be grouped into three broad categories: first, military-led approaches focused on a mixture of pre-emption, deterrence and retribution; second, regulatory or legal-judicial responses that seek to enhance the criminal

<sup>4</sup> A. Johnston, ‘Thinking about strategic culture’, *International Security* 19: 4, Spring 1995, pp. 32–64; J. Snyder, *The Soviet strategic culture: implications for nuclear options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> Errol Meidinger, ‘Regulatory culture: a theoretical outline’, *Law and Policy* 9, 1987, pp. 355–86.

<sup>6</sup> Joanna Spear, ‘The emergence of a European “strategic personality” and the implications for the transatlantic relationship’, *Arms Control Today* 33: 9 Nov. 2003, pp. 13–18.

<sup>7</sup> Caroline F. Ziemke, ‘The national myth and strategic personality of Iran: a counterproliferation perspective’, in Victor A. Utgoff, ed., *The coming crisis: nuclear proliferation, US interests, and world order* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 88–9; Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in time* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> On the unconscious life of administrative elements, see Howell S. Baum, *The invisible bureaucracy: the unconscious in organisational problem-solving* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Dan Reiter, ‘Learning, realism, and alliances’, *World Politics* 46: 4, July 1994, pp. 490–526; Dan Reiter, *Crucible of beliefs: learning, alliances and world wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at war: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> An interesting use of the concept that crosses the international–domestic divide is that of intelligence culture; see Philip H. J. Davies, ‘Intelligence culture and intelligence failure in Britain and the United States’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17: 3, Oct. 2004, pp. 495–519.

penalties for terrorist activities and improve civil–police cooperation; and third, appeasing options, ranging from accommodation to concession.<sup>11</sup>

The United States has evolved a sharply defined strategic culture. Its approach has been shaped by a belief in American exceptionalism: namely, that its political and moral values are superior to those of the rest of the world and justify its position of leadership. This has given it a sense of mission in the world and a confidence that its actions are in the broadest interests of humanity.<sup>12</sup> This self-belief has been allied to strategies that seek ways to leverage its vast material and technological power. It has predisposed American policy-makers towards a national security culture that privileges a military response. As a superpower, the US sees the use of force as an important signal of resolve within the international community. Its military gives the US a global reach and ensures that no targets are beyond its ability to strike. Since 9/11, increased American spending on defence (and especially defence research) relative to other major powers has accentuated this emphasis.

Although the United States has been involved in counterterrorism since the mid-1960s, it was only after the Iran hostage crisis of 1979 that this subject featured regularly on the presidential agenda. The US has consistently displayed an underdeveloped and somewhat two-dimensional counterterrorism culture. In part this is because counterterrorism has been seen as an unattractive political issue. In the White House there was a fear of encouraging public expectations that could not be fulfilled and a tendency towards blame-avoidance. Meanwhile, the US intelligence community was narrowly focused on the Cold War, playing to its strengths in technical collection and relying on allied expertise for coverage in areas deemed less important. Terrorism was frequently perceived as something sponsored by the Soviet bloc and was regarded as a minor subdivision of the ‘real problem’.<sup>13</sup>

American counterterrorist operations have been adversely affected by a ‘diet and binge’ approach to covert action and aggressive human intelligence collection. After the largess of the first three decades of the Cold War, covert action became mired in the foreign policy struggles between Congress and the White House during the 1970s. Special activities were shackled under President Carter and covert action appeared to be a dying art form. The Reagan era heralded the ‘unleashing of the CIA’, only for it to become bogged down once again in

<sup>11</sup> Neil C. Livingstone, ‘Proactive responses to terrorism: reprisals, preemption and retribution’, in C. W. Kegley, ed., *International terrorism: characteristics, causes, controls* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990), pp. 219–27; Grant Wardlaw, *Political terrorism: theory, tactics and countermeasures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 121–7.

<sup>12</sup> On the confluence of American idealism and national interest, see Christopher Thorne, ‘American political culture and the end of the Cold War’, *Journal of American Studies* 26: 4, Dec. 1992, pp. 316–30. On recent lineages of exceptionalism, see David Dunn, ‘Myths, motivations and “misunderestimations”: the Bush administration and Iraq’, *International Affairs* 79: 2, March 2003, pp. 279–97.

<sup>13</sup> The best summation of American approaches in recent decades is Timothy Naftali, *Blind spot: the secret history of American counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). The idea of connections between the Soviet Union and state-sponsored terrorism was strongly promoted by Claire Sterling’s book, *The terror network: the secret war of international terrorism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981), but the thesis is now regarded with some scepticism.

the Iran–Contra fiasco of 1986.<sup>14</sup> During the late 1980s covert action was rehabilitated partially by success in combating the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, only to experience another downturn after the end of the Cold War. A risk-averse culture in the CIA was reinforced by a decision in the mid-1990s to drop agents who were either ‘unsavoury’ or politically risky.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, 9/11 signalled a further swing of the pendulum.<sup>16</sup>

The US experience of terrorism has been confined principally to its presence overseas. Attacks upon its armed forces have been frequent and occasionally devastating—for example, the loss of 241 US Marines in Beirut in 1983. Yet it was not until the attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 and the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 that the US experienced serious terrorism within its own shores. This absence of a sizeable domestic threat resulted in domestic counterterror capacity being allowed to languish: there was a feeling that the country was invulnerable. This misperception was cruelly exposed by the attacks of 9/11. The intensity of the US reaction to 9/11 was a reflection of the enormous loss of life inflicted and gave the US the political will to use force more readily on the international stage. Although the United States has long been perceived as ‘trigger happy’, in reality, prior to 9/11, all presidents—even Ronald Reagan—have agonized before taking action in the realm of counterterrorism.<sup>17</sup> After 2001 the constraints that had hitherto made America a ‘reluctant sheriff’ were stripped away and replaced by a new predisposition towards pre-emptive action.<sup>18</sup>

US strategic culture has also led to international terrorism being linked to a nexus of other threats. America’s sense of its global responsibilities has meant that it has long been concerned with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and states that reject the prevailing order. Even prior to 9/11, the Clinton administration was warning of the potential linkages between international terrorist groups and ‘states of concern’.<sup>19</sup> It was clear that this interaction was regarded by some as the foremost threat to American security. Once

<sup>14</sup> Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American democracy*, 3rd edn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 227.

<sup>15</sup> Revelations about Central America had resulted in a ‘scrub order’ which required high-level and somewhat laborious approval for the CIA recruitment of agents with an unsavoury past, typically with strong terrorist connections or associations with human rights violations. The rise of a ‘play it safe’ culture during the 1990s is documented in Robert Baer’s *See no evil: the true story of a ground soldier in the CIA’s war on terrorism* (New York: Crown, 2002). See also Paul Pillar, *Terrorism and US foreign policy* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Although Richard Clarke, America’s Counter Terrorism Coordinator in the 1990s, has contrasted the seriousness with which the Clinton administration treated the threat from international terrorism with the lower priority attached to it by the Bush administration prior to 9/11, there are also underlying continuities. See Richard A. Clarke, *Against all enemies: inside America’s war on terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> This somewhat counterintuitive observation is persuasively argued in Naftali, *Blind spot*, pp. 117–65.

<sup>18</sup> See in particular the 1990s critique of America’s reluctance to intervene penned by Richard Haas, *The reluctant sheriff* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1994). Haas, now President of the Council on Foreign Relations, has recently rethought his position in the light of Iraq and now advocates caution in *The opportunity* (Washington DC: Public Affairs Press, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> President Bill Clinton, Speech to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 24 Sept. 1996.

again, military power was perceived to be the principal instrument by which to address these challenges.

A European strategic culture, on the other hand, is more elusive. The most obvious reason for this is that Europe comprises a mix of nations, each with its own particular history. Although they all now share important attributes—liberal democratic polities, market economies and adherence to the rule of law—they have diverged in their experiences of terrorism. Many countries, such as France, Spain and the UK, have contended with significant domestic terrorist movements, while others, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, have been spared a major domestic threat. Some European countries have more historical associations with counterinsurgency and terrorism in an ‘end-of-empire’ context, but again these experiences differ from one another. Moreover, the fact that terrorism was usually a national problem meant that it rarely resulted in sustained cooperation between European states. Individual European states possessed sophisticated internal security systems for combating terrorism and there was often significant bilateral intelligence exchange, but comparatively little effort was invested in trying to build interstate structures.

Another factor is that attempts to galvanize a coherent European identity in foreign and security affairs have only recently met with success. It was not until the Treaty on European Union, ratified in November 1993, that a foreign and security policy, as well as an internal security policy, became an avowed goal of the EU. Yet the challenge of terrorism has suited the EU’s particular attributes. Its pre-existing role in the internal security of its member states and its activities in the field of justice and home affairs ensured that the EU would be the mechanism chosen for regional counterterrorism.<sup>20</sup> Since 9/11 there has been momentum to build a more robust system of international cooperation.

Notwithstanding these complications, elements of a European style, focused on regulatory responses and the judiciary, may be said to have emerged during efforts against Baader-Meinhof and the Red Brigades in the 1970s and 1980s. This was a hallmark of French responses to Islamist extremism during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Even the UK, which engaged in a long military campaign against the Provisional IRA, gradually allocated more responsibility for counterterrorism to civilian agencies. The repeated assertions by Gijs de Vries, the EU’s counterterrorism coordinator, that Eurojust and Europol have a leading role in the EU’s counterterrorist effort underline this European regulatory approach with its focus on civil agencies.<sup>22</sup> The regulatory response has suited current European needs remarkably well because of its strong domestic dimension.

<sup>20</sup> The extensive cooperation among the British, Dutch and German security services against IRA activities in continental Europe during the 1980s is an example of this previous pattern.

<sup>21</sup> French efforts have placed particular emphasis upon magistrates and their close cooperation with the intelligence services; see Jeremy Shapiro and Benedicte Suzan, ‘The French experience of counterterrorism’, *Survival* 45: 1, Spring 2003, pp. 67–98.

<sup>22</sup> In explaining the action taking by the EU, de Vries has chosen to emphasize initiatives in criminal justice. See speech by Gijs de Vries, European Coordinator for Counterterrorism, ‘European strategy in the fight against terrorism and co-operation with the United States’, given at CSIS, Washington DC, 13 May 2004, at [http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/CSIS\\_Washington.13\\_May\\_2004.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/CSIS_Washington.13_May_2004.pdf), accessed 3 May 2005.

The 9/11 attacks brought home to Europe its own vulnerability. Not only were many of the perpetrators of the attacks formerly resident in Europe, but concentrations of Muslim populations in western Europe far exceed those in the US. For example, the Netherlands is home to one million Muslims, the UK to one and a half million, Germany to just over four million and France some six million.<sup>23</sup> While the vast majority of those citizens are law-abiding, the July 2005 bombings in London demonstrated that small pockets of second-generation resident Muslims can be won over to the cause of extremism and the practice of suicide bombing.

### **Assessing the nature of the 'new terrorism'**

Strategic cultures, and indeed cultures of counterterrorism, are to some degree historically determined and represent significant elements of continuity in a realm of change. Few things underline this better than the different ways in which the United States and Europe have conceived of the 'new terrorism'. One of the traits historically associated with American strategic culture has been a tendency to assert the importance of new developments that break with the past. In the 1990s this was most clearly illustrated by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) debate. After 9/11 the assertions of a 'strategic revolution' were quickly transferred to the field of terrorism. Al-Qaeda was deemed to be an example of a 'new terrorism'—perhaps even a 'catastrophic terrorism'—that confounded the old lessons about this seemingly well-understood phenomenon. Indeed, more recently, commentators in both the United States and Europe have begun to speak of a 'new Al-Qaeda' that is different yet again from the 'new terrorism' of 9/11.<sup>24</sup>

The most plausible assertions about the emergence of a 'new terrorism' were made in the mid-1990s by Bruce Hoffman, a senior analyst with RAND. Hoffman argued that terrorism was changing, with 'new adversaries, new motivations, and new methods' which challenged many of our most fundamental assumptions about terrorists and how they operate. Hoffman noted that while instances of attacks were going down, casualties were going up. He explained this in terms of a new religious terrorism which defied the old dictum that the terrorist wanted only a few people dead, but many people watching. Now, it appeared, killing was no longer an ugly form of political communication, or a form of bargaining with violence; instead, it was becoming a religious duty. In other words, the new terror was more apolitical and casualties were themselves the objective. This conjured up an alarming world without restraint, replacing the realist world of bargains, deterrence and rational behaviour, offering the prospect of terrorists who might seek to use WMD if they could

<sup>23</sup> Oliver Roy, 'EuroIslam: the jihad within', *National Interest* 71, Spring 2003.

<sup>24</sup> The references to 'newness' are innumerable. See e.g. Bush's comments on 'the new and changing threat' and the 'new and very complex challenge' in his foreword to 'National Strategy for Homeland Security', Office of Homeland Security, July 2002, at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book/nat\\_strat\\_hls.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book/nat_strat_hls.pdf), accessed 15 June 2005.

obtain access to them. It also implied that militant Islam might attack the developed states of the West, not because of what western countries were doing in the Middle East, but simply because of what it was. The catastrophic events of 9/11 seemed to herald such an era and offered an obvious rationale for a hard-nosed military response.<sup>25</sup>

There is now some disagreement about the newness of the 'new terrorism', and, four years after 9/11, the picture stands in need of reassessment. On the one hand, the rise of religious terrorism generally since the early 1990s, and of terrorism by Islamist groups in particular, is undeniable. This development was fuelled by the exodus of a quarter of a million trained and radicalized *mujahedin* from South Asia at the end of the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. They headed for their home countries, from the Mahgreb to Indonesia, or for new conflicts in Chechnya or Bosnia. Their organization is more fissiparous than that of the old terrorism, an ideological community rather than a fixed hierarchy. Al-Qaeda has tended to invest sporadic training and expertise in particular groups, rather than directing them. For many radical Islamist groups, Osama bin Laden is an icon rather than a leader.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, important elements of the old terrorism remain. Since 9/11, many terrorist attacks have been smaller and have been targeted on members of the coalitions fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Indeed, the overwhelming balance of effort by radicalized groups since 2003 has been to provide volunteer foreign fighters for the conflict in Iraq. The much-heralded use of WMD by terrorists has not materialized. Increasingly it appears that Al-Qaeda and its affiliates see themselves less as terrorists and more as a global insurgency with certain objectives. They may lack an explicit list of political desiderata, but they are waging an effective war of political communication, most obviously via the internet.<sup>27</sup>

Europeans have been more sceptical of the idea of 'new terrorism', suggesting instead that the rise of Islamist terrorism remains rooted in some old political and economic problems. It has suited European attitudes to interpret this phenomenon more in terms of a reaction to specific policies and military deployments than as a general anathematizing of the West. Gijs de Vries has pointed specifically to lack of progress on the Middle East peace process and in Iraq as key factors in terrorist recruitment.<sup>28</sup> Others have been inclined to talk

<sup>25</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Victor Gollancz, 1998). See also Ian O. Lesser, Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David F. Ronfeldt, Michele Zanini and Brian Michael Jenkins, *Countering the new terrorism* (Washington DC: RAND, 1999).

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Hoffman has used the persuasive analogy of a capital investment company. Others have talked of franchises. See Bruce Hoffman, 'The leadership secrets of Osama Bin Ladin: the terrorist as CEO', *Atlantic Monthly*, April 2002, pp. 26–7.

<sup>27</sup> The first to engage with the 'newness' problem was Thomas Copeland in his timely essay 'Is the "new terrorism" really new? An analysis of the new paradigm for terrorism', *Journal of Conflict Studies* 11: 2, Fall 2001, pp. 2–27. On the wider issue of new threats and old lessons, see C. M. Andrew, 'Intelligence analysis needs to look backwards before looking forward: why lessons of the past can help fight terror of the future', *History and Policy*, June 2004; Robert Jervis, 'An interim assessment of September 11: what has changed and what has not?', *Political Science Quarterly* 117: 1, 2002, pp. 37–54.

<sup>28</sup> 'Interview with Gijs de Vries on terrorism, Islam and democracy', 6 Sept. 2005, at Euroactiv.com <http://www.euroactiv.com/Article?tcaturi=tcm:29-136245-16&type=Interview>, accessed 12 Sept. 2005.



about a situation in which there is not so much a new terrorism, but a new and more globalized environment—in relation to communications, ideologies and capacity for violence—which presents our enemies with enhanced opportunities. Newness may be more about context, specifically the ability of social and religious movements to exploit opportunities provided by globalization. In other words, developed states have encouraged a porous world in which networks move elegantly, but states move clumsily. The internet as the ‘network of the networks’ is a good example of this.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly, the ‘new terrorism’ of 2001 does not look quite so innovative in retrospect. There are likely to be few further 9/11s, but sadly more attacks similar to those on Bali, Madrid and London. Politicians on both sides of the Atlantic have been quick to seize on the rhetoric of ‘new terrorism’ because it mobilized elected assemblies, delivering enhanced budgets and robust packages of security legislation. However, it has also provided a convenient excuse to forget awkward lessons expensively learned in past decades. Europeans have argued that, in the rush to address the ‘new terrorism’, the United States in particular has neglected some of the basic conventions governing the related fields of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and intelligence. These concern the primacy of political warfare and minimum force, a doctrine that is greatly enhanced by good human intelligence. History, in almost any decade, underlines that few low-intensity conflicts have been successfully resolved by a predominantly military approach, and never by applying large-scale formal military power.

### **Contrasting counterterrorism cultures after 9/11**

The different strategic cultures of the US and Europe have resulted in contending approaches to combating terrorism. In the realm of external security, the most striking difference has been in willingness to use force. As part of its integrated plan for countering terrorism, founded on the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, the US has accorded priority to its military and intelligence assets. The experience of 9/11 galvanized the US into a willingness to use its military power pre-emptively against a range of threats, in particular alleged state sponsors of terrorism and WMD.

In this area the Pentagon has been in the driving seat of policy execution. The military leads the ‘war on terror’ not only because of the war in Iraq and continuing operations in Afghanistan, but also because of the wider pattern of counterterror operations elsewhere. Special forces have increasingly been deployed in a military role and are now more the preserve of the Pentagon than of the CIA.<sup>30</sup> They are assisting in the retraining of local security forces in dozens of countries, with large contingents in Djibouti and the former Soviet Republic

<sup>29</sup> This thesis is most clearly explored in Roger Scruton, *The West and the rest: globalization and the terrorist threat* (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> The Pentagon boasts a wide variety of special forces, while the CIA also has its own soldiers in the form of the Special Activities Division (SAD). They operate differently.

of Georgia. A vast military deployment in Colombia is also increasingly justified on the grounds of counterterrorism rather than counternarcotics. Training operations are under way in dozens of other countries. Most recently, in North Africa a stream of newly arrived advisers are seeking to upgrade the capabilities of local forces. Underpinning all this activity is a substantial development of overseas bases to allow the greater projection of force.<sup>31</sup>

European governments have tended to assert that military force is a blunt instrument in the face of the elusive and disparate targets presented by an increasingly transnational terrorism. Europe has been more circumspect than the US in identifying a nexus between states of concern, WMD and international terrorism. This was the core of the difference between the Bush administration and France and Germany over the war in Iraq. The US alleged a link between Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, and further alleged that the threat from Iraq's attempt to develop WMD was imminent. Paris and Berlin were unconvinced by the evidence and argued that the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors should be granted a longer period to do their work. They were justifiably suspicious that American pressure for military action against Iraq owed more to its desire to remove a regime that Washington had long regarded as destabilizing in the region. The cost, however, was an iciness in transatlantic relations that has not been easy to thaw. As the US position in Iraq has deteriorated, France and Germany have barely contained their *schadenfreude* over the deepening quagmire.

Sections of American elite opinion have viewed the European reluctance to resort to force as a reflection of the structural disparity in power between the transatlantic allies. They have seen this as consistent with the past predilection of Europe to rely on the United States to take care of global threats, such as nuclear proliferation. Neo-conservative critics in Washington have argued that the Europeans choose to ignore threats because of their relative military weakness. In the words of Kagan, 'The incapacity to respond to threats leads not only to tolerance. It can also lead to denial.'<sup>32</sup>

The significance accorded to multilateralism is the second major transatlantic difference. Europe's experience of overcoming its own internal rivalries has led it to pursue policies based upon building consensus and adhering to the rule of law. This leads it to demonstrate the legitimacy of its actions by working for the broadest degree of international support. It was the perception of European opponents to the war that America had abandoned these principles when it attacked Iraq. That is not to say that Europe has always opposed the use of force. If an action has appeared to be proportionate to the aggression and if it is in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter on self-defence, then Europe has been willing to support the use of coercive means. For example, there was universal support in Europe for the actions the US took against the Taleban

<sup>31</sup> Ann Scott Tyson, 'US pushes anti-terrorism in Africa', *Washington Post*, 25 July 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Kagan, *Paradise and power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003).

regime in Afghanistan in 2001. The only European criticism was that the US did not draw on the military forces European states had offered for the operation and thereby limited the breadth of the coalition that toppled the regime.

In contrast, the US has become fearful of being constrained by the veto-power of allies. It has come to question the relevance of organizations such as NATO in the face of radically new threats that have emerged since the end of the Cold War. The Bush administration has expressed its preference for the informality of 'willing coalitions' over recourse to structured alliances in tackling crises. The administration has been selective about its international partners and openly critical about the value of the United Nations.

The third difference has been European advocacy of long-term strategies aimed at conflict prevention. Overseas aid and poverty reduction have come to be perceived as instruments by which some of the underlying causes of terrorism may be removed and some of the factors that lead to the radicalization of politics alleviated. This is also a sphere in which the EU can wield significant strength: it now disburses approximately 55 per cent of the world's official development assistance.<sup>33</sup> In post-conflict situations, the Europeans have been willing to provide troops for protracted peacebuilding projects, such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and they have provided the lion's share of resources to rebuild functioning societies. The US, for its part, has tended to be more sceptical about the value of 'foreign policy as social work'.<sup>34</sup> The US, and particularly the Pentagon, has been wary of tying down large numbers of US troops in peacekeeping and post-conflict situations. The rapid drawdown of the US military presence in Afghanistan after 2001 is testament to this thinking.

Consistent with their reluctance to sanction the use of force, Europeans have preferred to offer states accused of supporting terrorism positive incentives to reform their behaviour. Trade, diplomacy and cultural contacts have been viewed as more likely instruments than the threatened use of force to modify the errant behaviour of governments in countries such as Libya, Iran and Syria during the 1990s. Individual European states, as well as the EU itself, pursued regular interaction in the name of a 'critical dialogue'. In the case of dealings with President Qadhafi and the government in Libya, Europe could point to real achievements in the relationship.<sup>35</sup> In 2004 Libya announced that it was suspending its attempts to acquire WMD and was establishing a compensation fund for the families of the Lockerbie victims, in return for the suspension of economic sanctions.

A less favourable outcome has been forthcoming in relation to Iran. Three European countries—the UK, France and Germany ('E3')—have offered trade

<sup>33</sup> European Commission website, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/index-en.htm>, accessed 12 May 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, 'Foreign policy as social work', *Foreign Affairs* 75: 1, Jan.–Feb. 1996, pp. 70–85.

<sup>35</sup> The initial dialogue with Libya over WMD was developed by the overseas intelligence services of the UK and Libya; see Julian Coman and Colin Brown, 'Revealed: the real reason for Libya's WMD surrender', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 Dec. 2003.

benefits and possible admission to the World Trade Organization in return for an Iranian commitment to abandon its alleged programme to develop nuclear weapons. Iran has appeared to spurn the opportunities presented to it by the E3, thereby increasing the risk that the case will be referred to the UN Security Council. The White House has been persistent in its public sabre-rattling towards Tehran.<sup>36</sup> However, in August 2005 it was revealed that a major US intelligence review had concluded that Iran was approximately a decade away from manufacturing the key ingredient for a nuclear weapon. This is twice the previous estimate, which had suggested that point might be reached in five years. The sum of assessments by more than a dozen US intelligence agencies directly contradicts the dramatic statements by the White House and underlines scope for diplomacy with Iran over its nuclear ambitions.<sup>37</sup>

Internal security has also revealed some remarkable contrasts between Europe and America. Both sides of the Atlantic believe in the importance of combating terrorism through cooperation in law enforcement, judicial process and intelligence. Europeans place more emphasis on these instruments because they do not accord the military instrument the prominence it is given by Americans. Europeans are also predisposed towards weighing the balance that is struck between more stringent security measures against terrorism and the penalties thereby incurred in terms of human rights. They are more wary about investing law enforcement personnel with powers that could damage the core values of their societies.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, the effort of the US in homeland security since 9/11 should not be underestimated.<sup>39</sup> The National Strategy for Homeland Security has sought to construct a layered defence system. Overseas, the US has relied upon its FBI legal attachés working in embassies, and customs officials deployed in European ports, monitoring cargo destined for America. The next security circle concerns entry into US territory by foreigners; here the US has enhanced the security of airlines, introduced biometric identifiers into travel documents, reappraised its visa waiver programmes and tightened its borders. Since November 2002 the various agencies responsible for US domestic security have been amalgamated into the Department of Homeland Security, the largest reorganization of the federal government since 1947. America's last line of defence has focused on promoting cooperation among its plethora of police and intelligence agencies, the capacity of its emergency response systems and

<sup>36</sup> This was accompanied by private explorations of options. In 2002, Bush's deputy National Security Adviser had commissioned a paper which looked at options for regime change in Iran, citing WMD issue as the driver.

<sup>37</sup> Dafna Linzer, 'Review finds Iran far from nuclear bomb: estimate of progress contrasts with administration statements', *Washington Post*, 2 Aug. 2005.

<sup>38</sup> On the issue of values, see Alex Danchev, 'How strong are shared values in the transatlantic relationship?', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7: 3, Aug. 2005, pp. 429–36.

<sup>39</sup> The DoD has absorbed about half of all emergency funding since 9/11: Center for Defense Information, 'Security after 9/11: strategy choices and budget tradeoffs Jan. 2003', pp. 10–11, at <http://www.cdi.org/mrp/security-after-911.pdf>, accessed 3 April 2005.

the enhanced security of critical infrastructure such as power plants and refineries. However, the main focus has been upon strengthening borders, with less emphasis on capabilities for dealing with domestic events.<sup>40</sup>

As for Europe, steps have been taken since 2001 to address some of its vulnerabilities to terrorist activity. Several EU member states have drafted new legislation to prosecute terrorist activities and afforded greater operational powers to their police forces; information has been circulated more freely among intelligence services; new policies to target fundraising have been undertaken; and there has been a tightening of border controls. A common definition of terrorism, which had hitherto eluded agreement, was reached in draft form in December 2001 and entered into force in June 2002. As well as defining the types of crimes that comprise terrorism, it also determined stiff penalties to be imposed for terrorist offences.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, efforts to speed up the process of continent-wide extradition were achieved with the signing of a European Arrest Warrant (EAW). This designated 32 offences, including terrorism, punishable by a prison sentence of at least three years' duration, on which an arrest warrant could be invoked in one country and then carried out in the territory of another member.

In spite of the greater resources and attention devoted to it over the last four years, weaknesses in Europe's internal security have persisted. First, the priority attached to counterterrorism varies among EU states. While countries such as Spain, the UK, France and Germany have made strenuous efforts to address the new challenges, other countries have lagged behind because they do not perceive an imminent threat to themselves. This is reflected in the second factor, namely the reluctance of some countries to implement agreements that have been made. While all states have ratification processes that have to be respected, some countries have made little effort to draft domestic legislation to bring EU-wide conventions into effect. For example, in the case of a framework decision on the freezing of terrorist assets, the measure was agreed in March 2002, but as late as mid-2004 there were still states that had not enacted its provisions. Third, the European Commission still struggles to coordinate counterterrorism measures between the member states and the level of the Union. The EU has no internal security structure with the equivalent remit of the US Department of Homeland Security.

## **Convergence or divergence in transatlantic counterterrorism?**

What are the prospects for transatlantic convergence on counterterrorism? The practical business of everyday internal security cooperation and joint intelligence

<sup>40</sup> Hurricane Katrina has confirmed what many commentators have feared, namely that American domestic agencies remain ill-coordinated and, four years after 9/11, the United States is still not capable of dealing effectively with a mass-casualty event.

<sup>41</sup> Leading a terrorist group was liable to a sentence of at least 15 years, while financing its operations was liable to a punishment of at least 8 years. There are close parallels with the Italian 'deep-freeze' approach of long sentences for terrorism, adopted in the late 1970s.

operations has continued in spite of transatlantic political storms.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, there has been no simple split of America versus Europe: the UK, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands all deployed troops to Iraq. Yet longer-term tensions across the Atlantic have remained undiminished. The absence of WMD in Iraq confirmed suspicions that American explanations of the war were a smoke-screen, and the exposure of prisoner treatment at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib prisons appeared to confirm the worst fears about its actions. At the same time, tensions over Iran have every prospect of escalating as Tehran seeks to play off European and American positions.

Contrasting cultures have also thrown up persistent difficulties in both the internal and external security domains. First, America and Europe differ over issues such as the use of electronic surveillance. The recent decision by the US government to end the separation between information obtained by the law enforcement and by the intelligence communities could prove to be a serious obstacle to cooperation, possibly undermining a prosecution in a European court if it could be shown that the information on which it was based was inadmissible. Second, the US has expressed exasperation with the length of time it takes to obtain judicial cooperation with European countries. Third, there has been tension over sharing intelligence. The Europeans have been alarmed by what they perceive to be inadequate American attention to issues of data protection. This resulted in lengthy negotiations between the US and the European police office (Europol) before personal data could be transferred. The media have been a factor here, with European security agencies fearing leaks of operationally sensitive information to the American press.

Media attention has also heightened European anxieties about the troublesome issue of 'extraordinary rendition'. This focuses on the shadowy issue of the American treatment of detainees who have been moved to prisons in third countries, including Syria, Jordan and Egypt. Human rights groups have asserted, with considerable evidence, that 'extraordinary rendition', initially developed in the 1980s to bring foreign terrorists to trial in the United States for crimes overseas, now represents a system for outsourcing torture. It is increasingly clear that this is a substantial programme. In 2002 the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, told Congress that even prior to 9/11, some 70 people had undergone rendition. Congressman Edward J. Markey has suggested that since 9/11 the number is approximately 150. Confirmation of this has come from unexpected sources. On 16 May 2005, Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif told a press conference that more than 60 suspects had been rendered to his country since September 2001.<sup>43</sup> Cases such as that of Benyam Mohammed, a former London schoolboy accused of being a dedicated Al-

<sup>42</sup> See in particular the discussion of multinational 'Alliance Base' activities run out of Paris, described in Dana Priest, 'Help from France in key covert operations', *Washington Post*, 3 July 2005.

<sup>43</sup> George Tenet in 9/11 Commission hearing, transcript of 24 March 2004 session; Edward J. Markey, *Boston Globe*, 12 March 2005; Shaun Waterman, 'Egypt: US hands over terror suspects', *Washington Times*, 17 May 2005.

Qaeda terrorist, illustrate the problem. For two years US authorities moved him between Pakistan, Morocco and Afghanistan, after which he was sent to Guantanamo Bay in the autumn of 2004.<sup>44</sup>

These issues scare European intelligence and security officials because the practice runs contrary to their own culture. Since the end of the Cold War, Europe's clandestine agencies have undergone a quiet revolution. Legality and regulation have been at the centre of this, with services being placed on the statute books and elements of the European Convention on Human Rights being written into their regulations.<sup>45</sup> European services have embraced the new approach, which has increased their legitimacy and allowed them to develop a wider customer base and conduct more operations. Not only is the utility of these US renditions unclear, the European culture of public expectations is very different.<sup>46</sup> As recently as July 2005, intelligence officials in Washington expressed dismay that their British counterparts blocked their efforts to have a suspect, Haroon Rashid Aswat, seized in South Africa and moved to one of these undisclosed detention centres run by allied states, possibly Egypt. London hesitated at the idea of an extraordinary rendition of a British citizen of Indian descent, someone with a UK passport.<sup>47</sup>

Yet despite these public indicators of continued trouble, privately there have been sustained efforts at transatlantic convergence. At the centre of this process is a substantial reshaping of American counterterrorism strategy. Even in 2003 it was obvious that, alongside the dominant military culture of American counterterrorism, there was an alternative view. This alternative view was propounded largely by officials in the CIA and the State Department who emphasized political warfare, economic instruments, patient diplomacy and counterproliferation as an alternative to military intervention.<sup>48</sup> There was a growing recognition that, while the core terrorist groups may be impervious to political engagement, they draw support from a wider ocean of anti-western feeling throughout the Middle East, and indeed Muslim communities throughout the world. Specific policies in the Middle East were thought to be a substantial part of the problem. There was perceived to be too much emphasis on Osama bin Laden and not enough on the wider hostility that was developing in the Muslim world towards the US. By 2004 this alternative view had been given a higher profile by a number of vocal figures who were concerned about the lack of

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Grey and Ian Cobain, 'Suspect's tale of travel and torture: alleged bomb plotter claims two and a half years of interrogation under US and UK supervision in "ghost prisons" abroad', *Guardian*, 2 Aug. 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Jean-Paul Brodeur, Peter Gill and Dennis Töllborg, eds, *Democracy, law, and security: internal security services in contemporary Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). The process began as a Europe-wide response to the *Leander* case brought by the European Court initially against the Swedish security service.

<sup>46</sup> The matter has been complicated by arguments over the relative advantages of long-term observation of suspects versus capture and interrogation; see Jimmy Burns, Stephen Fidler and Demetri Sevastopulo, 'Different approach to tackling terrorism exposed', *Financial Times*, 12 July 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Philip Sherwell and Sean Rayment, 'Britain and American clash over tactics', *Daily Telegraph*, 31 July 2005.

<sup>48</sup> There were many alternative views, even within the Pentagon, and no effort can be made to catalogue them here. However, they were accentuated by anxieties in the State Department and CIA about the prominence of the Pentagon—often expressed as the 'eight hundred pound gorilla problem'.

progress in the 'global war on terror'. This included an 'anonymous' CIA officer, soon revealed as Michael Scheuer, who was formerly head of the CIA's unit specializing on Al-Qaeda.<sup>49</sup> In February 2004 it was echoed by no other than George Tenet, in a statement given to the Senate Committee on Intelligence urging less focus on Al-Qaeda and more attention to the general growth of extremism.<sup>50</sup>

In March 2005 there was evidence that this alternative view was receiving official attention. The NSC's Frances Fragos Townsend and her deputy, Juan Carlos Zarate, began a wide-ranging policy review. The arrival of Condoleezza Rice at the State Department was central to this shift. Shortly afterwards, Philip Zelikow, former 9/11 Commission Staff Director and now special adviser to Rice, was put in charge of a ten-member committee to reassess policy. Its meetings, which began in June, have taken it to London and Paris with the support of the White House. Privately there have been admissions that this initiative owed much to European influence.<sup>51</sup> These moves have been complemented by a renewed emphasis on public diplomacy at the State Department, under the leadership of Karen Hughes.<sup>52</sup>

These changes reflect a disillusionment with the war in Iraq and fears about Afghanistan. The Pentagon has accepted that the insurgency in Iraq is growing more violent, resilient and sophisticated. Economic reconstruction has been slowed, Arab diplomats have been targeted in Baghdad and the prospect of an early drawdown of US forces has been slipping away. The last year has seen approximately 500 suicide attacks.<sup>53</sup> Military leaders are also anxious about the war in Afghanistan. Although \$11 billion per annum is spent on keeping 22,000 troops in the field, the shift of attention to Iraq allowed the local insurgency a crucial breathing space. Meanwhile the G8 five-pillar reconstruction programme has stalled. More broadly, the State Department's most recent statistics paint a gloomy picture, showing that across the world there were three times as many terrorist attacks in 2004 as in 2003.<sup>54</sup>

A major overhaul of Pentagon strategy has been under way over the past year, triggered by a growing appreciation of the diffuse nature of Islamic terrorism. One example of this was a conference in June 2005 at the Special Operations Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Special forces commanders and intelligence directors from the US and many of its allies were gathered together

<sup>49</sup> Anonymous [Michael Scheuer], *Imperial hubris: why the West is losing the war on terror* (New York: Brassey's, 2004).

<sup>50</sup> George Tenet, 'The worldwide threat 2004: challenges in changing global context', statement to the Senate Committee on Intelligence, 24 Feb. 2004, [www.cia.com](http://www.cia.com).

<sup>51</sup> Guy Dinmore, 'US shifts anti-terror policy', *Financial Times*, 31 July 2005. Rice and Zelikow have worked closely together over a long period and in 1997 co-authored a book on the final collapse of communism in Europe.

<sup>52</sup> Susan B. Glasser, 'Review may shift terror policies', *Washington Post*, 29 May 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Recently the Saudi government commissioned a study of Saudi foreign fighters making their way to Iraq. It found that it was the invasion of Iraq that was prompting jihadists to volunteer, and most had not been in contact with radical organizations before 2003. See Patrick Coburn, 'Iraq: this is now an unwinnable conflict', *Independent on Sunday*, 24 July 2005.

<sup>54</sup> Susan B. Glasser, 'US figures show sharp global rise in terrorism', *Washington Post*, 27 April 2005.



to discuss the substance of the new counterterror strategy. The keynote address was given by General Bryan D. Brown, Head of US Special Operations Command, who said that there had been an unambiguous change in American thinking and a recognition that 'we will not triumph solely or even primarily through military might'.<sup>55</sup> Brown is an authoritative voice, given that the Pentagon has designated Special Operations Command the global 'synchronizer' for its new strategy.<sup>56</sup> Another example is that of General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who since July 2005 has expressed criticism of the idea that military instruments can offer the main solution in countering terrorism.<sup>57</sup> He has instructed the Pentagon to join the State Department in emphasizing the 'war of ideas'. The Pentagon has announced the award of contracts amounting to \$300 million to companies that will work to enhance its psychological operations.<sup>58</sup>

Have there been corresponding changes in Europe? Restored confidence in transatlantic approaches will certainly require a change of attitude on both sides. In December 2003 the European Council published a 'European Security Strategy' (ESS) that attempted to concert policy among the EU member states.<sup>59</sup> There was some evidence in the ESS that EU states have moved closer to American thinking on security threats by acknowledging that terrorist acquisition of WMD was a priority concern and that Europe would have to play a bigger part in addressing security challenges outside its region; that too often in the past European countries had left matters such as nuclear proliferation to the US. In the earliest draft of the paper reference was made to the possibility of military pre-emption, thereby narrowing the gap with US thinking, but in the final draft this was diluted to talk of 'preventive engagement'. Furthermore, the ESS remained wedded to UN approval for military interventions, a position which remained at odds with that of the US.

In 2004 and 2005 the US has shown a new willingness to consult with its European allies at an early stage of its policy process. The achievements made by the EU in internal security have made them a more important partner for the US. In recognition of this, a new US–EU forum entitled the 'High Level Policy Dialogue on Borders and Transport Security' has been created. This draws together the US Departments of State, Justice and Homeland Security with the EU Directorate General for Justice and Home Affairs and the European Commission. It is a concerted attempt to build transatlantic cooperation from an early stage through the sharing of ideas.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with General Bryan D. Brown, *Special Operations Technology* 3: 4, 7 June 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Fox, 'GWOT is history. Now for SAVE', *New Statesman*, 8 Aug. 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Alec Russell, 'Don't mention war on terror, say Bush aides', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 July 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Renae Merle, 'Pentagon funds diplomatic effort: contracts aim to improve foreign opinion of United States', *Washington Post*, 11 June 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Javier Solana, *A secure Europe in a better world* (Brussels: Office of the High Representative for CFSP), at [www.ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms/Data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/76225.pdf](http://www.ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms/Data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/76225.pdf), accessed 6 Feb. 2004.

## Conclusion

Strategic culture remains the biggest challenge to transatlantic convergence on counterterrorism. Security doctrines are matters of fashion, but strategic culture is much more firmly embedded. In the spring and summer of 2005 there was clear evidence of new thinking in Washington. Yet sceptics doubt whether the new strategy being prepared by the White House would result in genuine convergence across the Atlantic. Policy and implementation are two different things. Here again, history intertwines with strategic culture and past experience points the way. As some of the most insightful US commentators on counterinsurgency have remarked, one of the many ironies of America's long engagement with low-intensity conflict in Vietnam was that the high-level strategy was exemplary; however, strategic concepts and workaday practice were worlds apart. The civilian agencies did not wish to touch the dirty business of counterinsurgency and, on the ground, mid-level military commanders determinedly ignored pious exhortations about the value of social engagement. At the operational level, the army in Vietnam remained wedded to high technology and brute force.<sup>60</sup>

Some Europeans remain sceptical about whether the United States is capable of implementing the new strategy, because kinetic activities have always tended to be America's instinctive first response. Officials in Europe also note that the sort of information operations that now seem to form the cutting edge of recent American thinking have a nasty habit of backfiring if they are not done well. The available linguists and regional experts are already overstretched by the expanded intelligence effort and it is hard to see where the personnel will come from for sophisticated political operations. In short, it is clear that the United States has changed its mind; but Europeans are unsure whether the United States is capable of, or indeed has the capacity for, a change of heart. There are also sceptics in Washington. Few believe that the White House can persuade the many agencies and departments to work more closely together. The new strategies have been long in the making, for the very reason that Washington has been unable to resolve awkward debates over whether Iraq is making more terrorists and whether the United States needs to change its policy towards the Palestinian–Israeli dispute. Some observe that resolving to sell existing policies in the region better is an easier bureaucratic option than changing them.<sup>61</sup>

Looking to the future, the implementation of any new strategy will be especially hard because some of the problems are now so slippery that no one in America or Europe really knows what to do about them. The new problem

<sup>60</sup> Michael McClintock, *Instruments of statecraft: US guerrilla warfare, counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism, 1940–1990* (New York: Pantheon, 1992). See also Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of myths: the development of American counterinsurgency doctrine and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Some diplomats fear that the new strategy may remove the State Department's control over foreign security programmes in favour of the Pentagon, while the CIA worries about the Pentagon's interest in expanding its human intelligence capabilities. Interviews, Washington DC, June 2005.

may not be a new global terrorism so much as the nature of globalization itself. As early as February 2003, George Tenet warned the Senate intelligence committee that globalization, which had been the driving force behind the expansion of the world economy, had simultaneously become a serious threat to US security.<sup>62</sup> The problem was not so much a new enemy, more a new medium. A globalized world favours insurgent groups and puts developed states at a disadvantage. The greatest challenge for both European and American strategic thinking may be that a range of transnational threats are accelerated by globalization. The uncomfortable truth is that, while 'globalization works', it works best for Al-Qaeda and its admirers.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, the EU and the US must redouble their efforts to arrive at common perceptions of threats and responses in relation to countering international terrorism. They are two international actors that have a history of the closest cooperation, and only if they act together can this persistent and growing menace be addressed effectively. If they fail to work together, if their strategic cultures cause them to continue to diverge, then the prospects for the West's ability to address one of the most important issues on its security agenda are bleak.

<sup>62</sup> Edward Alden, 'Globalisation cited as threat to US security', *Financial Times*, 11 Feb. 2003.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Wolf, *Why globalization works* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).