

Presentation

The International Political and Security Situation after 9·11 Attack

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I “9·11 Syndrome”

In recent times, nothing is more dramatic than the impacts of “9·11 attack” on the US and of the US reactions on the world. It, so called “9·11 Syndrome”, has greatly affected current international political and security relations. In my point of view, when we make close and in-depth studies on “9·11 Syndrome”, the following tendencies and results should not be ignored.

1 Terrorism and Anti-Terrorism campaign dominates

Via the special “transmission mechanism” of the superpower, the US, the current impacts of Terrorism has been obviously elevated, and fiercely attacked the world community in an unprecedented way. Before long, Terrorism was only regarded by most of the researchers as one of such global issues as refugees, drugs, debt chains, environmental degeneration and shortage of water resources. These issues did arouse more and more concerns from the public, but never in a way that can dominate the overall reactions of a superpower and can change the focal point of the world community. Only after the “9·11 attack”, when an unprecedented superpower suffered an unprecedented blow, especially when the US targeted most of its military and diplomatic activities on searching and punishing the Anti-US Terrorists, has Terrorism received great attentions and produced great impacts never existed before. No matter whether other countries has been under the threat of Terrorism, or whether most members of the world community agree to regard Terrorism as their major enemy, given the super power of the US and its sequence of world affairs, the current international relations will be long time troubled by contradiction of International Terrorism and International Anti-Terrorism Campaign. The expansion of Anti-Terrorism Campaign is a special mark on the current global international relations given by the US. Personally I have no good impression of Saddam and his way of executing power, nor is certain that whether Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, which might put its neighbors in danger. However, from the perspective of global politics and security, I felt concerned about the way that the US dealt with Iraq crisis. The ending of this crisis can be considered as a reliable test on US hegemony and its dominated world order.

2 Tough Stands prevail

Since 9·11 attack, a new round of campaign has started with fighting against Terrorism and dealing with international issues at its core. Among all kinds of voices, the appeals for seeking “historical compromise”, represented by EU and the former Israeli leader Labin, and investigating in-depth and systematic sources for international Terrorism, held by some developing countries, continues to give its play. Nevertheless, in terms of influence and surging speed, they have been far less than that of another logic, that is, “a tooth for a tooth”, “return violence with violence” and “take preemptive measures by Iron-blood Policy”, which seems more powerful and more popular on current stage. Under the disguise of Global Anti-Terrorism Union, the US set out new striking targets without enough UN authorization. In the Middle East, the revenge guided by “blood for blood” appeared a round after another. Besides, the shadow of “Clash of Civilizations” has caused a clamour. All these facts have proved some worrisome tendency in a negative way. Although the old Cold War has already ended, new kinds of hostility and confrontations occurred instead. In the post cold war era, the international political and security relations are full of uncertainty, going against the good wishes of the majority public. In some regions, there have been overwhelmed with bloody and suffocating smell, where lacks peace and let alone development.

3 Arms race has been stimulated

From the international security relations point of view, related to the above policies and measures, there are two tendencies worthy of everyone’s attention: one is the accelerating arms race, the other is the rampant unilateralism. The former was not started from 9·11 attack though, it did get huge impetus from this event. The year 2002 might be the fastest year that the military expenditures among major powers have grown since the Cold War ended. The increasing military expenditures and development of high-tech military weapons has been an undeniable fact. In contrast to the situations immediately after the Cold War, it makes the international relations filled with complication and nervousness. This time, the same as most of the others, the US once again takes the bad lead. As far as I’m concerned, its accusation of Iraq, Iran and DPRK about developing weapons of mass destruction is in rather weak position because the US itself has done it heavily. The New Strategy of US National Security specially emphasizes that the US, based on current military power that is far greater than ordinary powers, must enhance its striking and deterrent capability to an extent that make any potential adversaries terrified and dare not take reckless action. According to the current situation, the military expenditures of the US will possibly exceed USD 500 billion within next few years. After 9·11 attack, the US not

only announced to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, signed by the US and Soviet Union in 1972, but also put forward aggressively the Nuclear Posture Review. It's stated in the Report that the US could consider utilization of nuclear weapons, including speed up the pace of developing small-size ones in order to meet unexpected challenges. The adjustment of US nuclear strategy will possibly bring serious effects though it's very difficult to predict what will happened after that.

4 Unilateralism rises

Unilateralism should not be considered as a patent of the US. However, as the only one super power in the world, what the US has said and done has become the catalyst for all conservatives and hardliners in the world, which makes the public feel more hostile and concerned on this trend. In 2002, the US showed its unilateralism to the full play, and it might be the most prominent year since the Cold War. It's worth to be noted that it's the New Imperialism backing behind the stance. It supports unilateralism in the following three ways. First, it supposes, the turmoil world after the Cold War needs a new kind of Imperialism, a kind of imperial policy that can meet the values of human rights, contemporary democracy and freedom, in order to deal with "failed states". Small countries need big powers while the big powers need using power and making order. Second, it said, New Imperialism can be not only of economic importance --- international financial institutions such as IMF and World Bank provide assistance to recipient countries according to their weaknesses --- but also of political and military significance, for example, NATO interfered in its neighboring country's affairs like Yugoslavia, the US intended to initiate military strikes on Iraq, and the US helped "the Arab countries to establish democratic order". Third, it argues that isolationism is impossible to gain its ground in a globalizatio era while unilateralism has its necessities. The US is a "kindness empire", a "new empire" that has great smash power and can take actions individually to those "Rogue states" or "failed states". The New Imperialism ignores the generally recognized norms of contemporary international relations and the principle of sovereignty, causing serious consequences on world community, and provides bases for those in tough stands and hard-line policies.

5 UN stands in contradictions

Everyone can easily find the busy figure of General Secretary of UN, Mr. Kofi Annan, from the reports of international mass media, and hear various comments from his spokesman. However, under the surface of hustle and bustle, behind the phenomenon that UN being respected and followed, the General Secretary has a lot of difficulties that each country can't

understand and share. As the leader of the biggest and most authoritative international organization in the world, his power and financial sources are restricted by the major powers, especially of the host of UN headquarter, the US. On some major issues, such as the Middle East peace talks, the resolution of Iraq issue and UN financial reforms, he has to compromise no matter how much he hates the interference of the big powers. The world can't afford to lose UN and even the super powers can't totally ignore the visible and invisible morality power of the Security Council. However, the guiding principle and other capabilities of UN are far from being maturity. Especially for the majority members, the developing countries, it's more disappointing than inspiring. It's fully proved by the Iraq crisis that UN stands in such contradictions.

6 The distinction of Euro-Asian continent as the geo-political center becomes the most prominent feature after 9·11 attack.

Since 9·11 attack, Euro-Asian continent, especially the crossing regions connecting Europe, Asia and Africa, has become the strategic commanding ground in military foreign affairs, the "Central Plains" chased by the big powers and the "central square" that current major international relations occur, develop and transfer. Of course, this is closely related with the messages that the US prompts out recently. Given the strong stands of the Bush Administration, Iraq crisis continues to develop in the way that UN Security Council, the Arab Union, EU and other countries have no way to step aside. The situation in the Gulf Region, Middle East, West Asia and the whole sub-continent of Euro-Asia becomes more and more tense, and has become the focal of international politics and the main battlefield of international conflicts. It seems that just over one night that people suddenly realize that this continent is not only rich in its reserves of some important natural resources such as oil and natural gas, and also one of the major hubs for the global communications and transports and for the sea passageways, but also the origin of the major religions in the world, histories, nations and civilizations, and even the major source of international terrorism and the main battlefield of international anti-terrorism campaign. In this continent, there are not only rising big powers and ambitious regional powers, but also transitions with destinations lost and failures among followers. It seems that it will inevitably become an important triggering site in the new round of international conflicts and international political struggles. In 2002, the increasing role of Euro-Asian continent in the games of all big powers and the declining strategic value of non Euro-Asian regions (including those traditional powers in the region) are two important tendencies worth to be noted.

7 A new round of multi-level interactions appears in the international political and economic arena.

Given the background of globalization, when using the telescope and microscope of political economy, one can have an even clearer perspective on the complicated “9-11 syndrome”. Economy is still the foundation of all, and behind the so-called moralities and statements is always the concern of different interests. Even all those major measures taken by the US to defend against Anti-US terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, especially the new program such as the so-called “the subversion of Iraq Regime” in hot debate recently, still follow this logic. Therefore, the economic situation of the US, its economic and trade relations with other economies, and the prosperity and stability of the world oil market with the US as its important consumer, the world financial system centered on US dollar and the international stock market with US stock market as its wind mark, are all heavily relying on the future perspectives of the international anti-terrorism campaign. In this regard, one can testify some reflections of world economic politics and world political economy. From the point of view of international political economy, the aftermath of 911 event is a very good case. The US economy fluctuated weakly, and the world economy was also in a slump. The position of US dollar was very weak as well with exchange rates varying in a big margin. The US stock markets and future market were also in an uncertain state. More importantly, some in-depth problems of the US domestic economic structure were revealed as some big corporations fell bankruptcy and some well-known corporations were found to have financial counterfeiting scandals. The public confidence towards big corporations and governments was seriously lowered with an even more challenging market forecast. The ability of the Bush Administration to deal with economic issues was called into question. Any observant and imaginative analyst will think about the historical links between domestic economy and external wars and all other enlightenment. No matter the tense situation of the Middle East and the Gulf Region or the severe criticism of Iraq Regime and war preparations by the Bush administration are out of domestic economic and political concerns, such as political concerns on party elections, economic concerns on the unstable position of the US dollar and strategic concerns on the utmost oil pipelines in Middle East and Gulf Region. In history, there had always been war prosperity of the US economy and contributed to the interests of some politicians and parties at the key moment. The “biggest advantage” of setting an external enemy is that it can help unify the domestic spirit and therefore help the government overcome its difficulties. However, even the most severe country conflicts and the cruelest military confrontations will not change the following fact: the human being now lives in a period of mutual economic dependence that no country (even the superpower like the US) can ignore its dependence on the international system, can ignore other country or region’s interests, forcefully carry out some of its foreign policies at the price of risking its own economic and trade relations and its own public welfares, and absolutely, unconditionally pursue its unilateralism and power politics. Without this understanding, one cannot truly distinguish those facts behind diplomatic rhetoric and propaganda and cannot really understand the essence of international political and

economic process.

8 Relations among some major powers are complexly improved

Against the backdrop of 9-11 attack, the relations among major world powers has improved in recent more than one years, which make the international security relations become more complicated. On one hand, due to various concerns, especially the needs to fight against international terrorism, the US actively improved its relations with Russia and China. There three former conflicting powers now enter into a stable state that their original security dilemmas, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Taiwan Issue, Chechin problems and NATO East Expansion, have been relaxed. On the other hand, the in-depth contradictions and hostility among them are still existed. It seems that long-term cooperation and conflicts are still the two sides of a coin. With the rising of Russia and China, and the “amendments” made by the US in order to keep its global hegemony, will be bound to cause the complication of the relations among major powers. In addition, the changes of each country’s domestic political, economic and social relations, such as the progress of Russian economic reform, the launch of political structural reform under the new Chinese leadership, and the coming US presidential elections and economic development, will greatly influence the relations among major powers. One does not mention here the complex relationship between the US and some of its European Allies such as Germany and France, which have been seeking more independence in regional and global affairs recently, and making international politics more colorful and balanceable. One needs to trace these factors further.

II Other Affairs To Be Noted

1 Korean Peninsular: complicated and vulnerable

In recent years, it seems that Korean Peninsular is bound to be a place full of ups and downs. Sometimes, it made people so nervous that can hardly breathe, for example, at the end of last year, when the Bush Administration first stopped its dialogue with DPRK on missile issues, and then included DPRK as one of the “Evil Axis” countries and later as one of the potential nuclear attack targets in the Nuclear Posture Review; or at the end of June 2002, when ROK and DPRK fought against each other with naval vessels. However, some other times it can also made observers surprising and inspiring, for example, when the foreign minister of DPRK met with the Secretary of State of the US, realizing senior summit, and decided to restart the dialogue between the US and DPRK at the end of July, or when the 7th ministerial conference between

ROK and DPRK was held in the middle of August at Seoul and reached agreements or agreement intentions at almost every issues. Most surprisingly was the announcement on domestic politics and foreign policies and the “major acts” by the highest leader of DPRK, Kim Jong Il. In a short period since last summer, he visited the Far East of Russia and met with President Putin, put forward some kind of domestic economic reforms --- for example, the government reformulated the wage level of urban and rural citizens and the price level of all daily consumptions, and decided to create a Sinuiju Special Area in the regions neighboring to China --- and invited Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi to visit DPRK and reached some important agreements on formally launching the normalization process of DPRK-Japanese relations. But in October, the situation took a sudden turn that a series of crises occurred centering on DPRK’s nuclear development program. That DPRK first declared its ownership of nuclear weapons and then announced to withdraw from the nuclear freezing program signed with the US aroused special concern and strong reactions of all sides. Maybe just due to such characteristics as suddenness and big ups and downs, as well as the possibility of structural reform and policy adjustment, that the Korean Peninsular is still a geo-political area with high uncertainty. Its future tendencies are worth of attention, with certain potential crisis and confrontations. The responsibility and mutual coordination among interest powers are very important in dealing with peninsular affairs and maintaining the stability of the North East Asia.

2 Regional conflicts and hot sites: irregular ups and downs

The Middle East and the Gulf region are still the “hottest” site in crises. Terrorism, oil interests, national conflicts, religious difference and geo-strategy all make this region the focal point of international conflicts. Besides, although the US won a temporary victory in its fight against Ben Ladan and Tariban regime, Afghan’ situation is still uncertain. Not only the reconstruction process is full of difficulties, but also the internal strife within various political powers is also worrisome. In addition, the failed murder of president Karzai and the murder of vice president has shown the capability of former Tariban regime while the latter one is a big headache for the US-led multi-national army (the whereabouts of Ben Ladan and his successor is not mentioned yet). In the Northern and Southern Caucasia region, the conflicts between Russia and Georgia about the “concentration area of Chechin terrorists” and the sensitive attitude of the US on this issue remind us that a new hot issue is hereby arising, most probably due to the rich oil reserves of the Caspian Sea. Nepal, a country surrounded by mountains of Asia, has become a new regional hot issue. Since the accidental death of the King Birendra, this country has fell into uncertainty. The conflicts between the state army and the guerilla forces are developing in the direction of war, therefore endangering the security of neighboring countries. These regions can be the hottest source of conflicts in 2002. In comparison, the ethnic conflicts and social

turmoil in the former Yugoslavia now becomes cooler, which make NATO, the safeguard of Kosovo, feel more released. In South Asia, after long time of war chaos, there is sign of dialogue and compromise in Sri Lanka. The confrontations between India and Pakistan are still in uncertainty though, but much better than that of the observer expected. It should be also noted that In Africa, the situation of the whole continent was calmer in 2002, except Zimbabwe due to the strong land reform policies implemented by president Mugabe, and most of the countries put their attentions on development. That the Earth Summit of Sustainable Development hosted by South Africa has received favorable comments from the world society can be regarded a meaning sign. In general, the integration process in different regions has been pushed forward respectively, fast or slow, and “regional politics” gradually appears on the forum of international relations.

3 The extreme right wing in West Europe: exposure, rise and falls

For analysts of European party politics, 2002 is an unusual year. In April, during the first round of presidential elections in France, the candidate, Le Pen, nominated by the Rightist party National Assembly became the “black horse”, knocking another candidate, a potential competitor of president Chirac, out of the playground. Though Le Pen failed to Chirac in the second round of elections in May, the political circles of France, even of the Europe, was shocked. Same in May, a Holland right-wing party leader was shot to death just before the elections, which was the first assassination of politicians in the contemporary history of Holland. This accident virtually helped the right wing and extreme right wing power win the coming elections, and promoted the new medium and right wing coalition government to adopt even more strict policies restricting immigrants. Considering the similar hard position of Le Pen on crimes and immigrations and the “political whirlwind” led by the extreme rightist in Austria two years ago, people can help asking whether the European political arena will turn to the right? Does it relate to the increasing immigrations and social crimes? And will be the Clash of Civilizations, especially the historical hatred between Christian and Islam? What will be the re-organization of various political powers in West Europe? Will the “third road” be popular? How does the traditional left (including the general left wing power such as the communists and social democrats) react to such tendencies? All these issues are to be investigated and studied.

Some conclusions

In general, since the 9-11 attack, there have been many new problems and tendencies arising in the field of international politics and security situation, while the content of uncertainty and

worry has increased. Will the future international conflicts be growing or declining? My opinion is as follows:

First, at least within the short and medium term, the possibility of terrorism, regional hot issues and local war will increase. Specifically, the conflicts between the US and the Islam radical group individually and regionally could become more and more prominent.

Second, the US as the sole superpower should take the main responsibility of the current world peace and stability, with more cooperative manner in international community. Inappropriate reactions or policies, such as the tough unilateral policy and the multi-standards applied to anti-terrorism campaign and non-proliferation activity will become one of the major sources for international turmoil in long term of period.

Third, in the foreseeable future, given the top priority of anti-terrorism setting by Americans, the coordination between the US and the other major powers will be enhanced. However, it cannot guarantee the relations among powers without difficulties and problems in the long run. The in-depth contradictions such as NATO expansion, Taiwan problem and military race are still unsettled.

Fourth, since the current problems of international security have been caused by various reasons, therefore, the resolution of these problems should not only rely on military means or arms suppression, but also on improvement of diplomatic coordination, economy and trade exchange, international arrangement, etc. Now, such voices can be heard in more and more countries, like some EU leading members, Russia, China and many developing countries, even within the US.

Fifth, economic globalization is still the irresistible trend of the world. At the beginning of the new century, there's growing mutual dependence among different countries, and the regional cooperation and integration following the example of EU is also making progress. These are favorable signs for international security and cooperation. In the near future, it will still be a very challenging task to realize and maintain global peace and stability. However, as long as every country work together, especially the major powers can act with responsibility, respect the UN Charter, and enhance their coordination, the human being will probably have a promising future.