



THE SHORT AND MEDIUM- TERM IMPACT OF AL QA'IDA ISLAMIST'S ATTACKS ON THE U.S.A., SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

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September 11, 2001, when Islamists affiliated with the terrorist organization Al Qaeda attacked iconic buildings in the United States, marked a turning point in recent human history. The impact of these attacks goes far beyond other contemporary events, which triggered major geopolitical processes, such as the 1956 Suez Crisis or the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. If initially humanity was in a state of shock, seeing how the superpower of the moment seems paralyzed by the aggression of a little-known enemy, later, security measures and geopolitical dynamics overturned not only the life of the Earth's population until then, but also paradigms, strategic concepts, political behaviors. This article aims to analyze how the attack orchestrated by Salafist fanatics in Al Qaeda has transformed and continues to transform society and global geopolitical dynamics.

Keywords: *war on terrorism; The Twin Towers; World Trade Center New York; Operation Enduring Freedom; Al Qaeda; Islamism; Salafism.*

Nothing special was announced internationally on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a working day like any other. No major international meetings had been announced, no conflicts had broken out, no natural disasters. Mankind followed, according to the time zone, the grounded schedule of the three of eight, 8 hours of work, 8 hours of relaxation and 8 hours of sleep. By 8:46 a.m., New York time, when the American Airlines Flight 11 collided with the 110-story North

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Tower of the World Trade Center building complex, which overlooked Manhattan Island and became a symbol of American economic success. A few minutes later, at 09:03, a second collision followed, of the United Airlines flight number 175, which hit the South Tower. From that moment on, the collapse of the Twin Towers had become a matter of time. Another half hour later, at 9:37 a.m., another American Airlines flight, number 77, struck the Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia, near the federal capital, Washington DC., and another half hour later, at 10:03 a.m., the United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Pennsylvania's Shanksville after passengers fought terrorists who hijacked the plane and crashed it either over the U.S. Capitol building, the seat of the American legislature, or over the White House, the seat of the U.S. presidency. In total, 2,977 people died in the attacks, most of them civilians, citizens of 90 states. Along with the victims, the 19 terrorists affiliated with the terrorist organization Al Qaeda, which in 1993 had another attempt to demolish the Towers and in 1997 had attacked the American embassies in the capitals of Kenya and Tanzania, had also died¹.

If, at first, many thought it was a terrible accident or a scene from a Hollywood action movie, the growing number of disasters showed that it was not about any unfortunate event or the imagination of a screenwriter, but about a very serious and real event. An event that took place under the eyes of a stunned humanity, who did not understand who the attackers were and, especially, how it is possible that the superpower of the moment was hit so systematically.

The shock felt by the entire globe on September 11, 2001 was followed by a series of "shock waves" that transformed society and the global geopolitical game, so that even two decades after the events the "ashes" of the Twin Towers did not completely "spread".

How far has the impact of Al Qaeda's attacks on the United States since September 11, 2001 been? And how does it reverberate two decades after the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers?

1. Very Short and Short Term Impact (1-5 Years)

At the general psychological level, the astonishment caused by the attacks, and especially by the collapse of the Twin Towers, was followed by a mixture of anxiety about what might follow, anger at the attackers, horror at the act of terror and compassion for victims and their families. With few exceptions, such as some Islamists who shouted for joy at the news that "the Great Satan" – as they call America – had been "pierced in the heart"².

¹ ***, "A Timeline of the U.S.-Led War on Terror", *History*, URL: <https://www.history.com/topics/21st-century/war-on-terror-timeline>, accessed on 11.09.2021.

² ***, "What ABC News Footage Shows of 9/11 Celebrations", *ABC News*, URL: <https://abcnews.com>.



The global media has devoted extensive news programs to terrorist attacks and their perpetrators. Within hours, Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden (1957-2011) became the world's main *non grata* personality. From Vanuatu to Newfoundland and from Lesotho to the Faroe Islands, every citizen of the planet learned about the Saudi fanatic who spread terror in the name of Allah. Practically from that moment, in the collective mind, terrorism has ceased to be a phenomenon more or less collateral to the Arab-Israeli conflict, becoming a very real and imminent global threat. The first global threat that humanity, in the midst of a globalizing march towards a presumed global governance, is facing.

Economically, the disaster caused by the collapse of the World Trade Center was followed by the closure for a week of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and other U.S. stock exchanges and the collapse of stock market shares, especially of airline and insurance companies. Of course, those who, by virtue of a special inspiration, had sold shares before 08:46 won, while the vast majority of stockbrokers lost huge sums.³ The devastation in Manhattan has cost businesses and impressive funds to restore the area, which was completed only in November 2014, when the *One World Trade Center*, a complex of buildings built near collapsed towers, was inaugurated.

Politically, the Republican administration of President George W. Bush, which had until then faced fierce criticism from the Democratic opposition, has enjoyed a period of respite, with general attention focused on managing the crisis generated by the attacks. Moreover, in the days following the attacks, the American society, deeply ideologically divided between Democratic progressives and Republican conservatives, regained its cohesion lost after World War II. For the first time since the end of the war, group ideology and interests no longer mattered in America⁴.

And, also for the first time, this time in its history, America was attacked on its own national territory.

So, on a military level, one day after the events, on September 12, 2001, President Bush went public and declared war on those who staged the attacks, by saying, "The United States of America will use all our resources to conquer this enemy. We will gather the world. We will have patience. We will be focused and firm in our determination. This battle will last and be resolved, but we are not

go.com/US/video/abc-news-footage-shows-911-celebrations-35571201, accessed on 11.09.2021; ***, "Palestinians celebrate at Damascus Gate", *Youtube*, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UucjbGmJILk>, accessed on 11.09.2021.

³ Marc Davies, "How September 11 Affected The U.S. Stock Market", *Investopedia*, 11.09.2021, URL: <https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0911/how-september-11-affected-the-u.s.-stock-market.aspx>, accessed on 11.09.2021.

⁴ Pa Timesherald, "The national unity following the 9/11 attacks vanished. Can we find it again?", *Daily Local News*, 10.09.2021, URL: <https://www.dailylocal.com/2021/09/10/the-national-unity-following-the-9-11-attacks-vanished-can-we-find-it-again-3/>, accessed on 11.09.2021.



wrong, we will win”⁵. And a few days later, on September 20, 2001, in a statement to Congress and the nation, the same American president declared *War on Terror*, saying that: “Our war on terrorism begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end here. It will not end until every terrorist group with global coverage is found, stopped and defeated.”⁶ On September 25, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced the launch of *Operation Enduring Freedom*, whose main mission was to liquidate terrorist groups operating globally, and on October 7, 2001, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was attacked with airstrikes by the combined American and British forces. Between September 19 and 20, 2001, Allied special forces reached Kandahar, and on December 7, 2001, the Taliban regime was defeated⁷. From that moment, the USA took over the military control of the Afghan state, remaining in the area for 20 years, until August 31, 2021.

Then, on January 29, 2002, in his State of the Union address to Congress, President Bush named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as part of the *evil axis of the pariah states*⁸. On March 19, 2003, the United States and its allies attacked Iraq, which they quickly conquered, so that on May 1, 2003, President Bush announced his “mission fulfilled”. The events of December 17, 2010 - December 2012 followed, when the states of the Middle East and North Africa were destabilized by a wave of radical Islamist anarchy, orchestrated by the Global Islamist Network, which turned Libya, Yemen and Syria into theaters of civil war and Islamist terrorism has proliferated more intensely than ever in its history. Then came the moments of May 2, 2011, when Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed by an American commando in his home in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and that of December 28, 2014, when the Obama administration declared war ended from Afghanistan, without withdrawing troops⁹.

The declared war on terrorism has reconfigured the strategic concept of the North Atlantic Alliance, which included terrorism among the asymmetric threats and, very importantly, offered a new legitimacy to NATO, faced until then with dilemmas and criticisms from political scientists, related to the role and meaning of maintaining the Alliance in the context of the end of the Cold War and the “end of

⁵ ***, “Remarks Following a Meeting with the National Security Team. September 12, 2001”, Sept. 11/Administration of George W. Bush, 2001, p. 1302, URL: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-2001-09-17/pdf/WCPD-2001-09-17-Pg1302.pdf>, accessed on 15.09.2021.

⁶ President George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People”, *United States Capitol*, Washington, D.C., 20.09.2001, URL: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>, accessed on 15.09.2021.

⁷ ***, “A Timeline of the U.S.-Led War on Terror”, *op.cit.*

⁸ ***, “Text of President Bush’s 2002 State of the Union Address Jan. 29, 2002”, *The Washington Post*, URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm>, accessed on 11.09.2021.

⁹ ***, “A Timeline of the U.S.-Led War on Terror”, *op.cit.*



history” through the final victory of neoliberalism¹⁰.

Moreover, the war on terrorism has brought to the forefront of geostrategic and intelligence analysis the problems of the Middle East and the entire Islamic space, opened new research directions, determined the development of related disciplines and professional skills, dedicated to preventing and combating terrorism, psychology radicalization and de-radicalization, communication in the event of a crisis generated by a terrorist attack, societal resilience to asymmetric and hybrid threats. It has also led to the establishment of research centers, *think-tanks* and university departments, to the publication of a rich literature, to the development of profile sites, as well as to the emergence of specialists in the field and the interested public.

On October 26, 2001, the George W. Bush administration announced that the United States had instituted, for a limited period of four years, the “United States Patriot Act of Unification and Strengthening America, by providing the appropriate tools needed to intercept and obstruct terrorism”¹¹.

Born out of the urgent need to ensure internal security, the law has massively expanded the powers of law enforcement, violating constitutional rights, to the point where America had begun to be described as a police state, a *Big Brother*¹² interested in overseeing and manipulating both own nationals, as well as nationals of other states¹³.

The mentioned act, which authorized indefinite and unconditional detention¹⁴ and the search and registration without a warrant, consent or knowledge of any American citizen or non-US citizen suspected of organizing terrorist acts¹⁵ (the warrant could be obtained later), included three main provisions:

- extensive surveillance capabilities for law enforcement, including by monitoring domestic and international telephones¹⁶;
- facilitating inter-agency communication to enable federal agencies to make

¹⁰ N.A.: Allusion to the work of the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* published initially in 1992, at The Free Publishing House, in New York.

¹¹ ***, *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act) Act Of 2001*, Public law 107-56, 26.10.2001; URL: <https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ56/PLAW-107publ56.pdf>, accessed on 01.09.2021.

¹² N.A.: Allusion to the character of the book *1984*, published in 1949 by the British writer George Orwell.

¹³ David Cole, “Patriot Act’s Big Brother”, *The Nation*, 27.02.2003, URL: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/patriot-acts-big-brother/>, accessed on 01.09.2021.

¹⁴ ***, Public Law 107–56—OCT. 26, 2001, *op.cit.*, Title IV, Subtitle B, Sec. 412.

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*, Title II, Sec. 206, Sec. 213, Sec.215, Sec. 216, Sec.217; Susan Jo Keller, “Judge Rules Provisions in Patriot Act to Be Illegal”, *New York Times*, 27.09.2007, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/27/washington/27patriot.html?ref=us>, accessed on 01.09.2021.

¹⁶ ***, *PUBLIC LAW 107–56—OCT. 26, 2001, op.cit.*, Title II.



more efficient use of all available resources in counter-terrorism efforts¹⁷;

- increased sanctions for terrorist offenses and an extensive list of activities that would qualify for terrorism charges, including money laundering for the purpose of terrorist financing¹⁸.

The legal provisions of the *Patriot Act* remained in force, with minor changes, until 2020, when the House of Representatives refused a new extension¹⁹.

The mentioned law became a model to follow for other states concerned with counteracting the proliferation of the global Islamist network, so that, gradually, the anti-terrorism legislation was consolidated, becoming a normal surveillance of the population in public spaces, then telephone conversations through “national security warrants” which automatically included all contacts of the subject²⁰, and, finally, of the public and private online environment. Specialized structures for preventing and combating terrorism have been created and developed, inter-agency partnerships have been laid or expanded on the British COBR/COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Room)²¹ or international model, in the name of the common goal of countering of the global Islamist network, such as the NATO-Russia format²², or regional organizations that have dedicated specialized structures to the same goal, such as the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization²³.

Also based on this law, new safety protocols were introduced when boarding aircraft or cruise ships, which were later taken over by all states of the world and maintained until now, an issue that led to the development of the border control equipment industry.

And, also in terms of security, the attacks of Islamists fully define the concepts of “strategic surprise” and “black swan”, often used in the specialized language.

¹⁷ *Ibidem.*, Title I.

¹⁸ *Ibidem.*, Title III.

¹⁹ Alex Abdo, Jenny Beth, “Op-Ed: Choosing between Big Brother and the Bill of Rights”, *Los Angeles Times*, 29.05.2015, URL: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0529-abdo-martin-nsa-20150529-story.html>, accessed on 01.09.2021.

²⁰ ***, “Controversă privind modul în care SRI ascultă telefoanele”, BBC Romanian, URL: https://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2006/03/printable/060301_sri_telefoane.shtml, accessed on 01.09.2021.

²¹ ***, *COBR (COBRA)*, Institute for Government, URL: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cobr-cobra>, accessed on 01.09.2021.

²² ***, *NATO-Russia practical cooperation*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, December 2013, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_12/20131127_131201-MediaBackground-NRC_en.pdf, accessed on 01.09.2021.

²³ ***, *Information on Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20081211154326/http://www.sectso.org/fk-03.html>, accessed on 01.09.2021.



2. Medium Term Impact (10-20 Years)

The attacks of September 11, 2001 entered the world's consciousness as a historic moment of maximum tragedy, which proved that not even America, with its huge annual defence budget, can benefit from absolute security. An annual event dedicated to documentaries, monuments and memorials, including the *9/11 Memorial and National Museum* in New York City, the *Pentagon Memorial* in Arlington County and the *93rd National Flight Memorial* near Shanksville²⁴.

Economically, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan has cost the U.S. budget about \$ 2.3 trillion. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, total military spending in Afghanistan (October 2001 to December 2020) was \$ 825 billion, with \$ 131.3 billion spent on reconstruction projects. To these expenses are added interest on debts used to finance the war, expenses for the care of veterans and expenses for Pakistan's operational bases²⁵. More than 50% of the funds were used to train and equip Afghan security forces, including the Afghan National Army and police forces, plus expenses for counterinsurgency operations and troop maintenance. In turn, NATO allies have spent significant sums on rebuilding and pacifying Afghanistan. For example, Britain and Germany, which had the largest number of troops in Afghanistan after the United States, spent about \$ 30 billion and \$ 19 billion, respectively, during the war²⁶. A report on reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, addressed to the US Congress in October 2020, states that between May 2009 and December 31, 2019, approximately \$ 19 billion was lost through fraud, abuse or waste²⁷.

On a human level, the costs have been huge:

- “members of the American service killed in Afghanistan by April: 2,448;
- American contractors: 3,846;
- Afghan military and national police: 66,000;
- other members of the allied services, including from other NATO member states: 1,144 (of which 27 Romanian soldiers);
- Afghan civilians: 47,245;
- employees of humanitarian organizations: 444;

²⁴ ***, “17 ani de la atentatul asupra World Trade Center din New York. Aproape 3.000 de persoane au murit”, *Avântul Liber*, 11 September 2018, URL: <https://www.avantulliber.ro/2018/09/11/17-ani-de-la-atentatul-asupra-world-trade-center-din-new-york-aproape-3-000-de-persoane-au-murit/>, accessed on 16.09.2021.

²⁵ ***, “Afghanistan: What has the conflict cost the US and its allies?”, *BBC*, 03.09.2021, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-47391821>, accessed on 12.09.2021.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ ***, *SIGAR OVERSIGHT*, 30.10.2020, Quarterly Report to Congress, URL: <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2020-10-30qr-section2.pdf>, accessed on 12.09.2021.



- journalists: 72”²⁸.

To these costs in Afghanistan, are added those related to counter-terrorism operations, carried out by the USA in other 85 countries, including Pakistan, Iraq, Syria/ISIS, Yemen, Somalia. A report published in August-September 2021 by the Watson Institute International & Public Affairs states that “more than 929,000 people died in the wars after 9/11 as a result of direct war violence and the reverberating effects of the war; more than 387,000 civilians were killed in the fighting; 38 million people have been turned into war refugees or displaced; federal spending on the post-9/11 wars exceeded \$ 8 trillion; the wars were accompanied by violations of human rights and civil liberties, both in the United States and abroad”²⁹.

All this represents a huge financial effort, reflected on the U.S. internal financial mechanisms, which in 2019 reported a negative current account balance of -480.225 billion dollars and an external debt of 20275.951 billion dollars, the highest on the globe³⁰ (the European Union has the largest cumulative external debt of over \$ 29.270 billion, but this is not a state, but a supranational structure³¹).

History has shown that whenever a superpower overstated its military presence, it ended up in economic decline and then lost supremacy in the geopolitical game of the time. An inexorable evolution, masterfully argued by the British historian Paul Kennedy in his reference work, entitled “The Rise and Decline of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000”, published in 1987. According to Kennedy, America’s share of global power is declining rapidly and, “the American political system, very liberal, non-interventionist, will not be able to stop this fall. In addition, America will have to face the two great tests that test the longevity of a global hegemon:

1. in military/strategic terms, the ability to maintain a balance between subjective, defensive needs, and field capabilities;
2. in economic and technological terms, the capacity to maintain its competitiveness and flexibility in the face of possible global structural changes.

The second test will be the most important, especially since, similar to the empires before it, America is experiencing *imperial overstretch* - or, in other words, “the total sum of American global interests and obligations is, today, much greater

²⁸ ***, *Costs of War*, Watson Institute International & Public Affairs, Brown University, URL: <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/WarDeathToll>, accessed on 12.09.2021.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ ***, “United States”, *CIA World Fact Book*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/united-states/#economy>, accessed on 12.09.2021.

³¹ ***, “European Union”, *CIA World Fact Book*, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/european-union/>, accessed on 12.09.2021.



than the power of the country to defend them all at once”³²”³³. Kennedy also warned that the United States would be unlikely to be attacked on its national territory (a statement contradicted by the September 11, 2001 attacks). “But it is very likely that at some point their global interests will be attacked. Situation in which they will be forced to choose between intervention and withdrawal. When the attacks become more numerous, as it happened with the magnificent medieval Chinese Empire, the United States will begin to retreat, recognizing its own decline”³⁴. A well-known risk of American military overbidding at the Pentagon, which analysts have been drawing attention to since the 1980s, Kennedy said, adding that “it is not at all surprising that the biggest concerns about the discrepancy between America’s commitments and America’s real power are in military circles, for the simple reason that they will be the first to suffer if this strategic weakness would be exposed in the harsh test of war. Hence the Pentagon’s frequent warnings about the obligation to do global logistical juggling, shifting forces from one “hot spot” to another as problems arise”³⁵.

The global war on terrorism, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, no matter how much it served the military-industrial complex economically, through the enormous costs it imposed on the federal budget, generated great financial imbalances for the American economy. This was a fact amplified by the Obama administration’s progressive “Talibanism”, which further opened the U.S. market to competing imports of its own products and allowed the deindustrialization of large parts of the United States by relocating industrial facilities to China, Mexico or other states with cheap labor, favoring multinational companies at the expense of the federal budget. Administration responsible, even indirectly, for the strategic “adventure” of the “Arab Spring”, which opened new and new battlefields, stimulated the proliferation of radical Islamism and terrorism, throwing America into the spiral of military spending based on capital market loans. Thus began the decline of American economic power. A situation understood by the Trump administration, which ordered the partial or complete withdrawal of American troops from the many hotbeds of conflict related to the very damaging war on terrorism, while ordering the establishment of active measures against the structure that created all this terrorism, namely the Global Islamist Network³⁶.

³² Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, Random House, 1987, URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/04/04A70DD54F5CB55BED6BE3B351_E242EE_The_Rise_and_Fall_of_Great_Power_Paul_Kennedy.pdf, p. 515, accessed on 10.10.2020.

³³ Alba Iulia Catrinel Popescu, *Tratat de geopolitică, Volumul I – Geopolitica puterii maritime*, Top Form Publishing House, Bucharest, 2020, p. 267.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 269.

³⁵ Paul Kennedy, *op.cit.*, p. 519.

³⁶ Information about this subject can be found in: Alba Iulia Catrinel Popescu, *Analize incomode*, Military Publishing, Bucharest, 2020, pp. 143-202.



The same decisions were taken by the Biden administration that ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and the liquidation of one of the most important sources of financial drainage from the federal budget. A strategic retreat in the purest *real-political* style, which left China and Russia responsible for managing an ultra-conservative Islamist regime. A neo-medieval regime that, if it does not face a civil war unleashed by rebels loyal to former Afghan leaders gathered in the *National Resistance Front of Afghanistan* led by Ahmad Masoud³⁷, will turn Afghanistan into a Salafist emirate near Shiite Iran of the “soft belly” of Central Asia and East Turkestan (now China’s Xinjiang Province), a *safe haven* future for the mujahedeen of the Global Islamist Network and a sponsor of global narco-terrorism, a strategic retreat resulting from an applied geopolitical exercise aimed to stop the American economic decline induced by the War on Terror.

And last but not least, it is important to mention that the war on terror has unleashed an unprecedented wave of migration from the hegemonic wars of the twentieth century to the present, in which, as mentioned above, 38 million people have turned into war refugees, or were displaced. A massive cross-border migration, which has destabilized the target states through the multiple economic, demographic, political, public health, public safety and national security consequences it has generated. Migration in the service of the Global Islamist Network, which has spread its “families” to target countries, as well as organized crime structures, which have made huge profits from human trafficking, artifact trafficking and war capture, from arms trafficking, narcotics, counterfeit medicines, etc.

**Instead of Concluding:
What Are the Potential Geopolitical Developments
in the Short Term in the Context of the American Economic Decline?**

The economic downturn, and especially the relocation of American industrial facilities to other countries and the huge economic costs induced by the coronavirus pandemic, have led to a significant impoverishment of the American population and a decline in the share of the middle class in the structure of American society in parallel with the even heavier burden of the federal budget, forced to support millions of direct or collateral victims of the medical crisis. Economic imbalances responsible for the increase in the percentage of the radicalized population and the emergence of left-wing extremist political movements, such as *Antifa*, *Black Lives Matter*, *Occupy Wall Street* or the right, such as *Proud Boys*. The spread of radicalization among members of the middle class of the American society has

³⁷ ***, “He promised an „organized resistance” to Taliban rule. Now he wants U.S. help to lead the fight”, *CBS News*, 19.08.2021, URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-news-taliban-resistance-amrullah-saleh-ahmad-massoud-panjshir/>, accessed on 12.09.2021.



deepened the ideological gap between the two parties that alternately govern the superpower of the moment, so that, internally, America faces great challenges related to maintaining national unity and the democratic framework provided by the Constitution –increasingly challenged by left-wing activists, on the grounds that it was conceived by former slave owners.

With these internal challenges, America is forced to reconsider its economic and military strategy. In this sense, there is the closure of the “small wars”, extremely budget-intensive and totally unprofitable in terms of international image, institutional influence and long-term strategic gains. Or, in other words, the replacement of the imperial strategy with a bourgeois, cost-effective strategy, i.e. economically efficient, flexible and innovative. Therefore, it is very possible to witness the creation of the Anglo-American maritime bloc, in the context of intensified geopolitical competition within the US-China-Russian trilateral, and a concentration of forces of this bloc in geopolitical areas considered of maximum geostrategic importance for both powers, such as Western Europe, the North-Southeast-European Corridor, India, Southeast Asia, the North Pacific.

Internationally, the growing geopolitical ambitions of France and Germany are likely to strain European and trilateral balances of the ruling powers of the international system, a matter that risks slipping the world order from the current uni-multipolarity to an unbalanced multipolarity, very dangerous for the *status-quo*.

India’s concerns about China’s emergence in the Indian Ocean and those of Japan, Taiwan, the South China Sea, Australia and New Zealand on China’s dominant behavior in the Pacific could also generate new military alliances (possibly even a NATO military alliance) to counterbalance the Chinese threat in the Indo-Pacific area.

On the other hand, the Russian-Chinese tactical binomial is unlikely (but not excluded) to turn into a continental bloc. It is more likely that Russia will seek to maintain its current role, independently, in the hegemonic Sino-American competition, aiming to obtain as many advantages as possible from each of the two competitors. Advantages that will aim at achieving its interests in the Black Sea region and the materialization of its European strategy, of maintaining the energy monopoly, in full resonance with Germany.

And in the Middle East, the Afghan challenge to Russia, Iran and China could end either through peace, if the Islamist network abandons the strategic plan to create the Global Caliphate with its capital in Jerusalem (unlikely), or through a massive destabilization of the area, by engaging Afghanistan in the power game of the Network-affiliated states (Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories), a destabilization that could delay Chinese ambitions in Eurasia.

The above data clearly show that the attacks of Islamists in Al Qa’ida on the USA, from September 11, 2001, represented a major turning point in the geopolitical and social dynamics of the last period of humanity.



On the one hand, the short- and medium-term impact of this geopolitical event has affected huge masses of people, reconfigured the global geopolitical game, accelerated the transformation of the international system from unipolarity to uni-multipolarity, and there is a risk of an imbalance towards an unbalanced multipolarity, it has plundered the US \$ 8 trillion economy, creating major global economic imbalances, and created a geopolitical environment conducive to the emergence of China and Russia.

On the other hand, the event of September 11, 2001 resulted in a paradigm shift in the role and place of security culture in society, brought to the fore the need to develop societal resilience in the face of asymmetric aggression and, at the same time, the issues of Middle East and North Africa and the existence of the Global Islamist Network, has developed directions of analysis of the Islamic space, new concepts, but also new professional skills. The attacks also triggered a paradigm shift in terms of security measures for civil air and sea transport, the need for increased monitoring of public spaces, security of critical infrastructure. Thus, in short, this event led to a strengthening of law enforcement institutions globally, in response to the development of terrorism as a form of political interaction.

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