
Part VI

The security–economy linkage in a global perspective

Editors' remarks

Most of the contributions to this volume are based on shared assumptions about the legitimacy of the free-market, competitive world trading system and the phenomena of 'globalization' to which it gives rise. They see terrorism as a weapon of the weak and excluded, which strikes at both the economic and the political foundations of developed democracies and which, on both counts, deserves an annihilating response.

These views are not universally shared. Many official authorities and individual analysts, in developing countries in particular, see the existing international trade system as being unfairly biased against the interests of less powerful participants, both in its rules and in its effects. Many also favour a broader definition of 'terrorism' to include cases of shocking and illegal violence used by the strong against the weak. On this view, which is expounded in detail in Said Adejumobi's chapter, it is possible to define certain kinds of business (including but not limited to private military activities) as having 'terrorist' effects or even constituting 'terrorism' in themselves. The overwhelming priority which the leaders of the developed world have demanded should be given since 11 September 2001 to combating the kind of 'super-terrorism' represented by al-Qaeda may be seen as a partial and selfish 'rich man's agenda'—or, even worse, as a cover for further onslaughts on the interests of other regions and civilizations.

In actuality, many of the steps taken to combat threats of terrorism and those related to weapons of mass destruction since 2001 have drawn remarkably wide support from developed and developing, 'Northern' and 'Southern', nations. The international climate has provided both moral and material incentives for players of all kinds to avoid being stamped as terrorists or as condoning terrorism. Regional organizations in the South as well as the North have hastened to adopt new, and more effective, anti-terrorism and anti-proliferation policies of their own. Their reaction has logic in so far as a world thrown into disorder by terrorism (and by violent responses to it) would be even less likely to produce remedies for economic inequality and underdevelopment than is the existing global order—however imperfect. Nevertheless, anyone who wishes to set anti-terrorism policy and the protection of legitimate commerce on sound and lasting footings needs to pay serious attention to the arguments—and the feelings—associated with what might be called 'the poor man's agenda'.

Saad Alfarargi's and Said Adejumobi's chapters are based on talks which introduced a valuable element of balance in this respect at the Liechtenstein Conference, and they do so in this volume as well. A supplementary contribution by Phyllis Bonanno notes that the restrictions on human movement introduced by the United States for anti-terrorist purposes after September 2001 may be counterproductive not only in commercial terms but also in impeding the education of developing-country students in US institutions and US ways. This may turn out to be only one of many contradictions inherent in defending an open model of society and the economy by means that tend to curtail the openness of both.