

The GWOT and the Joker: Fourth World War in 2006

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The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) identifies its enemy of record as “Islamic extremists,” and so it finds theaters presumably wherever Islam confronts other religions and ideologies. Islam confronts Western Christianity and Judaism in the West and Israel, Orthodox Christianity in Russia and Serbia, Hinduism in India, Buddhism in Thailand, Communism in China, etc. Pretty simple. The cause of war is obviously within Islam itself, the result of a dysfunctional religious paranoia that finds enemies everywhere it goes. In response and legitimate self-defense, the crusader spirit lives on, embodied by the leadership of the United States and its fearless, will-not-be-intimidated President, protecting all that is good and right from the hallucination of an evil caliphate empire which intends to “rule the world.”

But look. The darkest visions of international Islamism notwithstanding,^[i] in fact, “the terrorists” have no state, no army, no navy, no air force, no regular soldiers, no heavy weapons, no conventional military capabilities at all to speak of, as well as no verified Weapons of Mass Destruction, no tested delivery systems, no surveillance satellites, no space weapons, and above all else, no particular identity. The 9/11/01 attack - that act of terrorism which ostensibly necessitated the GWOT - was perpetrated by nineteen men of mixed nationalities who were armed with nothing more than razor blades

It is a challenge, then, to square these facts with the expenditure of some \$440 billion (plus another \$120 billion for current wars) in the 2007 US Defense budget.^[ii] Surely, the GWOT justifies at least some of that investment in security. But really, does all that money go to fighting an enemy who cannot be conclusively identified, except as a network of violent, very low-tech, and yes, very determined Muslim irregulars? Asymmetric warfare, indeed.

While the GWOT dominates collective consciousness, the Pentagon’s latest (2006) Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) establishes Great Power conflict, most particularly with China^[iii] (though Russia and India can also be considered potential rivals), as the main focus of its preparation for future wars, and implicitly of its prosecution of current wars. If money talks, the QDR and the 2007 Defense budget together can be taken at face value, and then the intent of the GWOT starts to resemble a prism, refracting the light on conflict to make it appear coherent in the eyes of a presumed beholder, whose emotions have been skillfully blackmailed through the icon of the 9/11 attack. The intention is to mesmerize and delude, to contort any and all conflicts within a central fear-mongered rubric that cannot be substantiated by facts. Now, the GWOT appears to be a cudgel and a cover story for persuading people to accept and support wars around the world that have much less to do with Islamist terrorism than they do with Great Power objectives.

How many wars are there? What are they about? If the GWOT charade is followed, there are presumed to be some unknown number of wars grinding away, mostly unreported, both within a central Middle East theater and off in the far-flung periphery. Somehow, they all conform to the conjurer’s spell and fall into place within a constellation of events that have terrorism, not Great Power games, as their common denominator. But the presumption is questionable at best, and the true face of conflict is at odds with the illusion. Of the current identifiable shooting wars, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, few if any of them have terrorism at their root. Some can be classified as “civil wars,” where popular insurgent elements are attempting to seize state control. But the majority of current violent conflicts around the world are wars of national liberation, and their diverse protagonists can best be categorized as nations of the Fourth World.

Fourth World Wars

The Fourth World is the constellation of indigenous peoples and nations in conflict with states. It was first conceptualized during the 1970s^[iv] – at a time when the wars of First World decolonization were widely perceived to be in their last chapters. The Fourth World concept has its roots in a revolutionary tradition that dates back at least to the 1770s, but its phase in the 1970s had begun in 1945 – at the end of World War II and the subsequent independence of new states in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Oceania and the Caribbean, states which largely became constituent members of the so-called Third World. Fourth Worldists of the 1970s argued that, while the phase of decolonization might have been in transition, the momentum had by no means been spent, and that there remained many chapters of liberation struggles yet to be written.

Fourth World wars have often been hijacked and cynically exploited as the fodder of Great Power conflict. During the 1970s, for instance, the phase in which decolonization occurred was framed by the Cold War context. Within that context, many national liberation struggles were fostered and manipulated, but they were almost always misperceived as simply proxy wars between the

capitalist First World and the socialist/communist Second World. Declarations from alien rule were always more important than East-West rivalry. As a consequence of decolonization, from the end of World War II in 1945, until the (presumed) end of the Cold War in 1991, scores of new states achieved independence. The membership of the United Nations (which was built by and for Great Powers) more than tripled, climbing from 51 to 159, mostly as the result of liberation movements that broke down European imperial states, notably Great Britain, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

Then, in the early 1990s, decolonization came to the Second World, within a context then framed as George H.W. Bush's "New World Order" (also known as "the post-Cold War period" - when China largely replaced the Soviet Union as the primary object of US military preparations). Second World decolonization appeared as a net gain for the First World, although the state system increased in complexity and decreased in coherence, to the net detriment of all Great Powers. From 1990 to 2001 (the year marking initiation of the present context), the population of states represented at the UN increased to 189, mostly as the result of fragmentation of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Ethiopia. UN membership then grew to 191, following the admissions of East Timor and Switzerland, in 2002.

In other words, coincident with Great Power conflicts, the process of imperial disintegration and proliferation of new states defines a major trend of world history for the past few centuries. Empires have been falling apart for a long time. No reason to think it's over yet. The advance of a nascent world empire, in the name of Globalization, has not yet proven its capacity to overcome the systemic fragmentation that defines the prevailing trend.

Since 2001, within the current context of the GWOT, Fourth World independence movements have continued a phase marked by the disintegration of multi-national post-colonial states, and conflicts are now intensifying in significant locations - places of strategic importance for Great Power relationships. And just as previous contextual chapters (like the Cold War) have confused the understanding of decolonization, so too the GWOT now overlaps with and obscures the fundamental nature of indigenous liberation movements, while simultaneously obscuring Great Power dynamics. Under GWOT cover, the stage is set for Great Power conflict in many Fourth World theaters, and also for a tsunami of independence movements.

The Joker

The GWOT context of current Fourth World wars cannot be reduced to simple terms, because it is intentionally ambiguous, multilayered, covert, and misleading, and it is being administered by people who apparently believe their propaganda is credible. The pattern is revealed best when understood in terms of Great Power conflicts, as opposed to terrorism. Even then, it is a study of endless contradictions - the roots of which lie at home, in American Indian policy.

Historically, American Indian nations have always been the subjects of United States foreign policy, which was originally administered by the War Department. Indian nations have been parties to international treaties with the United States (and other countries), and to this day are referred to as "sovereign" nations that enjoy "self-determination" and have government-to-government relations with the federal state. Many Indian nations still are associated with traditional territories, in the form of colonized reservations, and they have nominally autonomous administrative institutions ("tribal governments") that are unique, differentiating them from all other ethnic groups and minorities in the United States. But their place in American society is highly compromised, especially in their explicit treatment as "internal colonies"^[v] now administered by the Interior Department (while misrepresented by the State Department),^[vi] and in a very inconsistent pattern that shares little among the experiences of other indigenous peoples of the United States - particularly those in Hawaii and Alaska, who have neither treaties nor reservations nor government-to-government relations. And grossly outnumbered by about 99 to 1, within a generally oblivious population that is ordered by an ethos of integration and individual equality in a so-called democracy, American Indian nations are forever caught in a twilight zone which can be characterized only in terms of ambiguity. Now you see them; now you don't.

The model of American Indian policy is manifest outwardly in a foreign policy that is equally ambiguous in its recognition of indigenous nations within other states. The best analogy for this ambiguity is the Joker card, which has meaning and value assigned by the one who holds and plays it. The policy is characterized by duplicity. Sometimes indigenous nations in other countries are useful to US interests, and sometimes not. Usually, the United States stands by the principle of territorial integrity, which is a universal right of all states, codified in international law. The exceptions to the rule are therefore most interesting, but such exceptions often are conducted in covert "special operations" of the CIA or outsourced to unofficial foreign policy agents, greatly increasing the challenge of perception from without. History reveals the pattern.^[vii]

In 1925, within a former context involving Great Power conflict, the United States played the Joker, when it provided military support for the Kuna Indians, in their rebellion against the government of Panama.^[viii] In the 1980s, within the Cold War context, the United States recognized Miskito Indians in their war of self-defense against the Nicaraguan government (and enlisted them in the CIA's illegal Contra War against the Sandinista regime).^[ix] Meantime, it denied recognition to the East Timorese, in their war of self-defense against the Indonesian government. Then the Joker's value was reversed, as policy moved to reintegrate the Miskitos in Nicaragua (within a post-Sandinista regime), while it was forced to accept the de-facto independent statehood of East Timor, in a United Nations intervention. Within the New World Order context (in the early 1990s), the policy recognized the indigenous national identity of Eritrea, but only after having denied that identity for decades, and then again, it was due to de-facto

statehood achieved despite US support for an Ethiopian empire. Meantime (in 1992), the US Joker sold out Iraqi Kurds to Saddam Hussein's brutal regime, after having supported their rebellion in the Gulf War of 1991, and then reversed again, to protect them from Saddam until 2003, in the now-forgotten "Northern No-Fly Zone."^[x] In today's GWOT context, US policy is to support Kurdish autonomy in Iraq (and perhaps Syria and Iran, as well), while denying it in Turkey. In the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, today, the US State Department stands full-square against recognizing the right of secession as equivalent to the right of self-determination, but on the other hand, secession can be accepted on a "case-by-case basis," clearly depending on its expedience in Great Power relations.^[xi]

Certainly, other states (including Great Power states) can also play the Joker card as a foreign policy instrument, when it serves their interests. And they can participate in the GWOT charade, as well. But most states play the Joker very rarely and only close to home, and mostly where useful indigenous nations are located directly across their own borders in neighboring countries - as opposed to finding situations all around the world and in many other countries, in a discernable pattern repeated through different contexts. And for most states, there is an understanding that playing the Joker is not always effective. In the hands of incompetents, it can backfire and provoke a mutual response which threatens their own territorial integrity - the right to which all states claim equally. Most states, but especially large multi-national states that are little more than local empires, are vulnerable to the same weapon the Joker represents - that is, territorial disintegration. Most states also perceive that the system is presently becoming over-populated, to the point of incoherence, which threatens them equally. Most states view secessionism as an absolute anathema, and generally refuse to sanction Fourth World liberation struggles.

On the other hand, there are several thousand identifiable indigenous peoples and nations to account for, and it is unrealistic to think that none of them will ever achieve independence, from this point on. Their most common experience is being colonized, and little has changed since the departure of foreign imperialists from Europe or wherever. Local imperialists are often more onerous than former overseas rulers ever were. So, the original revolutionary impulse - to be liberated from alien control - continues its forward march. Meantime, most Fourth World self-determination movements have historically sought external recognition and validation, as well as financial and military support, from whoever would provide it, whether that party was the United States, any other state, or other revolutionary movements, including Islamic movements.

Categories for Investigation

[Emboldened Italics indicate recent, unresolved, current, or predicted warfare (within 2006). Enumeration indicates war tabulation.]

Definition of War

The definition of "war" is somewhat open-ended here, given that it must include presidential authorization of massive, indiscriminate retaliation for singular terrorist attacks perpetrated by small groups of individuals, as well as endless military occupations, diverse kinds of covert action, low-intensity violence, severe repression, outsourcing to private contractors, collateral killings of innocents, and search-and-destroy missions against unidentifiable combatants, as well as 30-minute-long exchanges of nuclear warheads. Here, data are taken and interpreted from global surveys of "armed conflict" and "self-determination movements" compiled in the *Peace and Conflict 2005* publication produced by the Minorities at Risk Project, and the Armed Conflict and Intervention Project^[xii] (both based at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, at the University of Maryland), and from the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO),^[xiii] and also from other similar data sources on current violence, as noted.

Minorities and Ethnic Groups

It is necessary to clearly identify actors, in order to reveal the convergence of the GWOT, Fourth World wars, and Great Power objectives. Most everywhere, indigenous peoples and nations are conflated with minorities, ethnic groups, and terrorists. In the United States, which is a 99-percent immigrant society, minorities and ethnic groups can best be conceptualized as *aggregates of individuals* who share certain attributes like race, culture, language, religion, and national origin. Such minorities and ethnic groups generally do *not* share attributes that correspond to traditional territories and historical self-governing institutions.

Sometimes, indigenous peoples behave and operate as ethnic groups. Sometimes, ethnic groups develop nationalist identities and ideologies, and metamorphose into indigenous peoples and nations. Without denying that indigenous peoples might indeed constitute numeric minorities, or that they might share common experiences like discrimination (e.g. compare Native Americans and African Americans), the focus must be on identifying situations in which self-determination movements are understood to reflect a national experience of colonized, oppressive conditions within defined territories.

Civil wars

Likewise, Fourth World wars are often misperceived as "civil wars" (with which they sometimes do coincide), just as their protagonists are frequently misunderstood as simple puppets of external elements (although sometimes those elements are clearly

at work). Civil wars have been assigned many different definitions, by various observers and theorists. Here, *state control* is the objective of civil wars - which come in two types, sometimes coinciding with each other and/or with Fourth World wars, and sometimes occurring as GWOT and/or Great Power theaters.

Type I Civil Wars are waged by and against insurgencies organized by *ideology* (Islamist Taliban in *Afghanistan* [1], Islamist Salafists in *Algeria* [2], Marxists in *Colombia* [3], Maoist Naxalites in *India* [4], Maoist anti-monarchists in *Nepal* [5], Communists in the *Philippines* [6], and democrats in *Myanmar* [7]).

Type II Civil Wars are common in multi-national post-colonial states, especially in Africa, where all the players may in fact be indigenous, but ideologies are somewhat irrelevant, and the insurgents appear as “*communal contenders*”^[xiv] who attempt to seize state control from another ethnically-defined nation (Sunni versus Shiite in *Iraq* [1], Hutu versus Tutsi in *Burundi* [2], non-Katangan versus Katangan in the *DRC* [3], northerner versus southerner, or Muslim versus Christian in *Ivory Coast* [4] and *Chad* [5], and clan versus clan in *Somalia* [6] - apart from *Somaliland*, which is a Fourth World nation

Total Civil Wars in 2006: 13

Irredentist Wars

Another category distinct from both civil and Fourth World wars (though they may in fact coincide) is “irredentist” - where international boundaries have divided ethnically-defined peoples or nations in some irrational way. These wars may result in reestablished boundaries, but they do not generally result in fragmentation that liberates and adds another independent actor to the system. Irredentist movements can be found today especially in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), Africa, and eastern Europe, but presently, the most important shooting war to report is in *Kashmir* - which has significant convergence with the GWOT, Great Power objectives, and Fourth World conflicts.

Fourth World Wars

The Fourth World wars of interest here are not characterized by the social integration movements of discriminated minorities. Neither are they characterized by attempts to seize state control through civil insurgency, on basis of either ideology or ethnic identity. Nor are they driven by irredentism, with a given people attempting to leave one state and join another neighboring state. Rather, Fourth World wars are about liberation and self-determination within historically defined territories.^[xv] “Secession” is not always an accurate term of reference, since it implies a history of union based on choice, rather than imperialist imposition. And disintegration of an existing state and formation of a new one is not always an essential requisite, since lesser forms of devolved “autonomy” are often the objectives of Fourth World conflict. Sometimes, these wars are very one-sided, as states attack indigenous peoples who mobilize non-violent self-determination movements. Sometimes, the wars become genocidal. (Tabulation below.)

Other Categories

Another useful way to categorize cases would be to identify existing multi-national states that are on the verge of “*failure*,” given the (questionable) presumption that any disintegration of state control reflects weakness and dysfunction, rather than wisdom and strength. Still another category would be in *prediction* of which Fourth World conflicts are likely to result in the *formation of new states*, and which are likely to spiral downward in black holes of *repression and genocide*. Yet another cut would enumerate cases that are *hot spots*, *slow cookers*, and *time-bombs* and also those cases like Eritrea and East Timor, which have apparently been *resolved* (especially through independence). All such categories are useful, but the first organizing principle here will be *location* - which, in Great Power conflict (as in real estate), is everything.

Great Power Objectives

Location must be qualified in Great Power geopolitical games. For the purposes at hand, qualifiers include: traditional power elements, military force configurations, overland transit routes, strategic sea-lanes and chokepoints, strategic resources (primarily, energy resources and critical metallic minerals), compliant populations, and other force multipliers and dividers.

Connecting the Dots

Space limitation precludes depth analysis of cited cases. Web-links are provided for reference and further review. The cases are not necessarily possible to validate irrefutably in terms of actual GWOT analysis, since critical facts are likely classified, not to be released for decades (if ever), and conclusions are left to be inferred, conforming to the open-ended GWOT platform.^[xvi]

The GWOT battle plan calls for non-specific, pre-emptive, offensive attacks (“We are not going to play defense; we are taking the war to the enemy, so we don’t have to fight at home...”) within “The Long War” against non-specific “terrorists” in “many countries,” which will unfold indefinitely into the future, perhaps for generations. Other states, including Great Powers, have their own versions of the GWOT, within one grand charade. In fact, the charade has a rather universal appeal to many states, which use

it to brand all their internal enemies as “terrorists” and thereby to justify violence and repression against them, no matter what they might actually be fighting for. The purpose here is to identify the most significant GWOT theaters as dots on the map, wherever they can be found, and then to identify any underlayment of Fourth World wars, and finally to connect any pattern of Great Power objectives perceivable in these places.

Identifying Great Power objectives is, like GWOT analysis, largely inferential, because real information is so classified.[xvii] The inference process starts with available guiding documents, like the succession of QDRs and Defense budgets, which typically orient investigation along 15-to-20 year planning horizons for “preparation to confront perceived future threats.”

The net result of these preparations, since the days of the Cold War, has proven to be a veritable weaponry juggernaut, with a life of its own, which does not and is not likely to change dramatically, due to sudden, isolated terrorist attacks out of the blue. Aircraft carriers, submarines, missile defense systems, nuclear warheads and space weapons are all intended for use against Great Power rivals, not irregular insurgents armed with AK-47s, suicide vests, razor blades, and sticks and stones – no matter how clever and vicious they may be. Once an order for a given weapons system is placed, it will likely be delivered. If the intended purpose of that system becomes subject to review, due to changing conditions, then a new justification for it might be necessary, and if such justification is not already available, then it can be fabricated.

This has always been the nature of arms races, even one-sided races against imagined future enemies. They do not stop, until they get to war. They are runaway trains. The juggernaut creates the very environment and conditions that the weaponry is supposed to resolve. Here, we follow guiding documents to theaters in which all that expensive hardware gets deployed, in the process of taking, holding and controlling strategic space - which extends to outer space.

The GWOT officially starts on 9/11/01, though it could be argued that the war had been continuous since 1991,[xviii] and that 9/11 simply marks a change in context. The enemy of the day before 9/11 was clearly China, and it could be argued that China was still the enemy afterwards, which is why it remains the focus of QDRs and military budgets today.[xix] So 9/11 changed little in the background of events, while changing much in the focus of foreground events.

Admittedly, the 9/11 attack has proven to be a contextual turning point in Great Power relations. It provided a pretext for launching the GWOT (which was, strangely enough, al-Qaeda’s clear objective, too), which meant unleashing a long-planned US military intervention in the Middle East, Central Asia, and elsewhere - filling a power vacuum that was left after Russia lost much of its former influence, due to the Soviet collapse in the 1990s. It was a “unipolar moment.”[xx]

More than simply a question of controlling the flow of oil, the intervention made it possible to constrain the movement of any potential regional or global rivals, namely Russia and China (and maybe India). The GWOT has meant taking American military forces and bases right up to the borders of all three states, something which was never possible during the Cold War or even in the New World Order contexts, including the short-lived Gulf War of 1991. Above all else, it has prevented China from gaining access to the oil fields of Iraq,[xxi] which was one thing that Saddam Hussein actually might have controlled - and was not going to be permitted. Since the GWOT began, China has had to go elsewhere for oil, and is doing so in Iran, Sudan, and Nigeria (and elsewhere) - which all are GWOT and Fourth World war theaters.[xxii]

Israel

The GWOT center of political gravity remains **Israel**, as it must be, due to the central focus of Islamist consciousness. Without Islamism, there is no GWOT, and without the GWOT, there are only bare-boned Great Power interests. Israel is a critical actor in Great Power dynamics, serving as a regional forward base and auxiliary force for the United States in the eastern Mediterranean, able to help control passage to and from the Suez Canal and Red Sea, which is of special importance for Russia, whose Black Sea Fleet could be bottled up in a time of crisis.

Israel’s security is determined in great part by the conditions it imposes on *Palestinians* [1], who have fought for liberation (in a Fourth World war) since 1948. After having denied Palestine’s independence for all this time, the United States and Israel have now finally arrived at the understanding that a “two-state solution” is the only way forward. Thus, the US has been forced by circumstance to play the Joker, with the implicit decision to allow another seat in the United Nations (whose membership will grow to 192). But the liberation process (which cannot be called secession) will likely remain violent, due to multiple fundamental contradictions,[xxiii] and war may continue indefinitely, even after Palestinian statehood is achieved.

Afghanistan and Central Asia

In the first official GWOT operation, in 2001, the United States and its allies overthrew the Islamist Taliban regime in **Afghanistan**. The Taliban project was and remains dominated by ethnic Pashtuns (Pathans). In the GWOT effort, indigenous Tajiks and Uzbeks in the north (the Northern Alliance), and Hazaras in the center of the country were mobilized, intensifying pre-existing Type II Civil War and Fourth World wars which dated from the early 1990s, after Soviet occupation forces were withdrawn. In constructing the new Karzai regime as a showcase exercise in “popular democracy,” the United States has actually

reestablished Pashtun domination, which implies the reversal and withdrawal of prior US support for Fourth World organizations.

As Taliban insurgents emerge anew from their redoubts and engage in Type I Civil War, new violence and political repression can be anticipated in areas populated by *Tajiks*, *Uzbeks*, and *Hazaras*. But war is reported currently in southern regions inhabited by indigenous *Baluchis* [2].^[xxiv] The violence largely occurs in the cross-fire of Pashtun forces representing opposing ideologies (Taliban versus Karzai), as Baluchis either take sides in the GWOT or return to a liberation struggle that has been active since the British departed, in 1947.

Although the GWOT agenda of retribution for the 9/11 attack seems obvious, the Afghanistan operation has been perhaps primarily a Great Power struggle - over the land-locked energy resources of Central Asia, and the US determination, in 2001, that they should not be controlled by neighboring China and/or Russia.^[xxv] It is common knowledge that huge oil and gas deposits are located in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and the big problem is transit to global markets. At the time of occupation, the United States favored land routes that required building pipelines through western Afghanistan, south through Pakistan (that is, through indigenous Baluchistan) to the Indian Ocean. All other routes would have gone through Iran, Russia or China, unless they were to cross the Caspian Sea.^[xxvi] Plans have changed, since then.^[xxvii]

These pipelines were not feasible without substantial control of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and also the countries to the north, especially Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, where the US has built major military bases since 2001. Both China and Russia understand these bases not for their ostensible purpose (GWOT operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere in Central Asia), but rather for their Great Power implications.^[xxviii] The bases would never have been built without mutual cooperation in the GWOT charade, but four years later, the point has been lost. Now, the United States is being evicted from Uzbekistan and having its rent increased in Kyrgyzstan, creating a new vacuum waiting to be filled.^[xxix] The long American thrust into Central Asia has not gone according to expectations, but a foot-hold still exists in Afghanistan, and it can probably be maintained, at least as long as the GWOT is credible. That credibility is fading fast.

Iraq and Turkey

As of this writing, **Iraq** appears to have descended into a general Type II Civil War,^[xxx] with Sunni and Shiite elements struggling to control the state, despite (or as consequence of) the US occupation. Kurdish *Peshmerga* fighters have figured prominently in this war, mostly in operations against Sunni insurgents, Baathists and suspected jihadis. Meanwhile, Kurds living in northern Iraq have enjoyed relative peace and tranquility, since the US occupation began in 2003, though in fact since the “Northern No-Fly Zone” was established in the mid 1990s. These days of peace are likely numbered, and renewed warfare can be anticipated, not only in Iraqi Kurdistan, but also Turkish Kurdistan, and perhaps Iranian and Syrian Kurdistan, as well.^[xxxi] The problem with indigenous Kurdish autonomy or independence in Iraq is that it sets an example for other Kurds; and the problem with the United States playing the Joker, in recognizing and defending Iraqi Kurds, is in the duplicity and reversal of its meaning outside Iraq’s boundaries.

Turkey has a long history of brutal, if not genocidal, repression of Kurds^[xxxii] (commonly called “terrorists”), who comprise about a fifth of the total population, concentrated in the southeast. Turkey also has a serious Islamist movement to contend with (making it a GWOT theater), and meantime, it is a major Great Power ally, due to its shorelines on both the Mediterranean and Black seas, its control of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles chokepoints (that is, controlling Russia’s only year-round access to open ocean), its military cooperation with Israel, its transit route for oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea, and the US military bases which it allows in its territory.

During the New World Order context, when the United States was protecting Iraqi Kurds from Saddam’s forces, in the Northern No-Fly Zone, Turkey was permitted to make repeated military incursions into Iraq, attacking Turkish Kurds who took refuge there, as well as Iraqi Kurds who sheltered them. No reason to think that the United States will restrain Turkey from mounting a major offensive into Iraq, when (not if) “autonomy fever” spreads again across the border.^[xxxiii] As for its commitment to the Kurds, the US track record speaks for itself. The *Kurds* [3] have been betrayed and sold out on three major occasions in the past (1923, 1975 and 1992), after getting US aid and assistance in their quest for independence. No reason to think it won’t happen again.

The Balkans

It could be argued that the Balkan Wars of the 1990s were prelude to the GWOT, or that they occurred as an extension of a GWOT that actually began with the Gulf War of 1991, which may in fact have begun with the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, which began with the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and so on.^[xxxiv] After all, the whole premise of the GWOT alludes to a “Long War.” It could also be argued that the Balkan Wars of the 1990s were never totally resolved by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and that the same general set of actors remains in place for another showdown. Despite the wave of state fragmentation and formation of the 1990s, another round of Fourth World wars is looming and will likely be played out in the near future.

At present, mineral-rich *Kosovo* [4]^[xxxv] is a Fourth World time-bomb, and **Serbia-Montenegro** is about to disintegrate

violently, within 2006. Just as in the last round, Russia may stand with its Orthodox Slavic kinfolk who control Serbia, and if the United States does not support Kosovo, then Iran will likely exercise Islamist influence again among its Muslim ethnic-Albanian Kosovar allies, and if Iran doesn't, then al-Qaeda will. The conflict will go misunderstood as a GWOT theater, when in fact, its roots are to be found in wars fought centuries ago.

During the 1990s, the United States was slow to get on the right side of history, attempting to obstruct or prevent the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, to the net effect of actually exacerbating destruction that might have been avoided. This time around, Kosovo wants its status resolved by the end of 2006, and its independence is already a fact (bringing United Nations membership up to 193). Unless Iranian influence is actually desired in the picture, it would be relatively easy to just move ahead, having conceded the point.

However, given this scenario, after Kosovo's statehood it can be predicted that **Montenegro** will split with **Serbia**, bringing UN membership to 194. Orthodox **Montenegro** will then be faced with a Fourth World independence movement in its Muslim **Sanjak**[xxxvi] province. Meanwhile, Orthodox **Macedonia** will be faced with a Muslim **Albanian**[xxxvii] irredentist movement. Orthodox **Serbs** in **Kosovo**, **Bosnia** and **Croatia** are likely to be drawn into action.[xxxviii] **Serbia** is likely to react violently to all of these developments. This will likely have the result of drawing Russia's hand.[xxxix] And this time, Russia is not in a moment of weakness comparable to the last round.

The Caucasus

Russia's overall strategic position has been in decline since the late 1980s. Presently, there are new deployments of US forces and bases in Romania and Bulgaria - placing new constraints on Russia's freedom of movement through the warm-water Black Sea and then the Turkish Straits (which is of special importance for Russia's Black Sea Fleet, based in Ukraine). Russia faces further US deployments in Central Asia and Georgia, and increasing American influence in oil-rich Azerbaijan, which is now the source of a new largely-British (BP) pipeline that flows away from Russian control, through Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean.[xl] Then, there is an increasingly assertive America-friendly Ukraine, separating Russia from irredentist allies in Moldova. And Ukraine is threatening to disrupt the flow of oil, gas, and critical minerals like titanium, and to limit Russia's Black Sea access to a very short coastline, between Ukraine and Abkhazia. Apart from that coastline, the Black Sea shores are occupied by hostile neighbors.

Abkhazia[xli] is a Fourth World nation which has been asserting its independence from **Georgia** (not Russia), since the Soviet fragmentation of 1991. Away from the Black Sea coast, Abkhazia's northern boundary cuts through the Caucasus mountain range, which is the home of many other Fourth World nations, which are Muslim and have been so for centuries, long before al-Qaeda existed. One such nation is **South Ossetia**, which is, like Abkhazia, also asserting independence from Georgia, and playing host to Russian troops stationed there to defend it from Georgia - whose external support now comes primarily from the United States. South Ossetia is home to some notorious Islamist elements, whose refuge is the infamous Pankisi Gorge.

Meantime, on the north side of the Caucasus, the Fourth World nation of **Chechnya** [5][xlii] has been locked in a blood-soaked struggle for independence from Russia, since the Soviet fragmentation of 1991. Chechnya's war has long been associated with the GWOT, especially in Russian claims of al-Qaeda's involvement. But the United States is curiously ambiguous about Chechnya, which indicates its Joker potential. On the one hand, Chechnya provides evidence for the main cover story - that the GWOT is a common struggle uniting Russia with the United States and other states. On the other hand, oil-rich Chechnya serves the interests of those who were never satisfied with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and are still holding out for further weakening Russia, even if that implies Machiavellian cooperation with international Islamic terrorists. It is useful to vilify Russia for its pattern of human rights abuses in Chechnya, realizing that destabilizing its energy colony is a means toward a greater end.

For those who would play the Joker as covert or overt American policy, Chechnya also has the potential to inspire similar self-determination movements, especially among other Muslim nations controlled by Russia in the Caucasus. These movements threaten Russia's oil and gas pipelines which run west along the northern Caucasus plain towards Ukraine, from where they run across most of Europe - making Russia the preeminent source of European energy and the world's second most important energy exporter, after Saudi Arabia.

Since 1991, the Chechen conflict has had serious and violent repercussions in **Ingushetia**, **North Ossetia**, **Dagestan**, **Circassia**, and **Kabardino-Balkaria** (the multiple fronts are tabulated here as one continuous theater [6]).[xliii] Kabardino-Balkaria is of extra importance for Russia, due to its deposits of some one-half of the world's reserves of tungsten and molybdenum[xliv] - which are strategic metals with important military applications. Meantime, other Muslim nations within Russia but away from the Caucasus - including **Tatarstan**, **Bashkortostan**, **Udmurtia**, **Chuvashia**, and **Mari El** [xlv]- have all openly opposed Russia's policy in Chechnya and are themselves likely to push for self-determination, if the Chechen war is not resolved soon and in a process not based on military force and repression.

Russia's problems with Fourth World nations are largely of its own making, rather than the result of "terrorist" infiltration or American subversion. In fact, Russia plays the same game of ambiguity towards indigenous nations as does the United States in

its Indian policy. In every one of its constitutions since 1921, Russia (and formerly, the Soviet Union) has guaranteed to the indigenous peoples enclosed within that they are understood as nations, whose participation in the Russian Federation reflects a union of choice, rather than imperial domination. Every one of those constitutions contains explicit language about “autonomy” and “self-determination,” up to and including the “right to secession.”^[xlvi] But Russia has rarely proven true to its constitutions, and so has had to deal with the consequences of its duplicity - like the fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the decolonizing process that continues at present, especially in Chechnya.

Russia might use nuclear weapons before it lets go of Chechnya, and meantime, it is not about to leave Abkhazia and South Ossetia under Georgia’s control. Perhaps Russia will accept the independence of Kosovo, in exchange for the independence (and possible absorption) of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.^[xlvii] And the United States is unlikely to go to war over Georgia’s dismemberment, though the public betrayal will be an embarrassment. Abkhazia and South Ossetia probably will become integrated in the Russian Federation, and the wars in Chechnya and North Caucasus will continue indefinitely at low intensity. And as a net result, Russia will increase its relative Great Power strength, having played its own Joker in Georgia.

Southwest Asia: Iran and Pakistan

Iran and **Pakistan** co-exist as neighbors, simultaneously united and divided by multiple factors. They occupy different sides of the GWOT – Iran branded as one of the two remaining points of the formerly triangular “axis of evil” (now that Iraq has been occupied), and Pakistan identified as an official GWOT ally of the United States. They both are Muslim societies, governed by repressive dictatorships masquerading as democracies: Iran is run by Shiite Islamists, and Pakistan by secular Sunni military autocrats. Iran is dominated by Persians, Pakistan by Punjabis. Pakistan is India’s nuclear-armed enemy; Iran is India’s technological and energy partner and a nuclear-weapons aspirant. Pakistan is the recipient and purveyor of Chinese nuclear technology; Iran is the recipient of Russian *and* Chinese nuclear technology, as well as their political support in confronting the West, and now is a major source of China’s oil imports. And both states have serious problems with Fourth World nations, especially with Baluchis (a.k.a. Baloch, Balochis), who straddle their common border and occupy extensive territory on both sides.

As an officially designated “state sponsor of international terrorism,” **Iran** can expect to see the Joker played against it. But does the GWOT explain the Joker? Or is the Joker better explained by Iran’s current attempt to acquire nuclear technology? What other factors might be in the mix? In early 2006, Iran and China announced an oil development deal worth \$100 billion,^[xlviii] and it was reported on the same day that the US State Department sought special funding to support Iranian “opposition groups.”^[xlix] This non-specific appellation is probably adequate to explain some of the recent violence along Iran’s southwestern border with Iraq, in the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, which is occupied by the indigenous *Ahwaz* [7],[**I**] who are ethnic Arabs. It might also explain increased repression of *Kurds* [8],[**li**] along the northwestern border with Iraq and Turkey, and of the *Baluchis* [9],[**lii**] who occupy the southeastern border region adjacent to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Sistan-Baluchestan province includes the strategic coastline along the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman, near the Strait of Hormuz – where there is constant and congested traffic of oil tankers, freighters, and warships (especially American warships based at Diego Garcia and Dubai). It should be evident that any attempt to weaken the Iranian state through territorial disintegration also attempts to weaken Iran’s allies, namely China, Russia and India.

Fourth World nations in **Pakistan** appear to be mirror images of those in Iran. Instead of being designated as “victims” by the United States, as they are in Iran, the *Baluchis* [10] are under attack in Pakistan (and by US-led forces in southern Afghanistan), suspected of harboring or supporting al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists.^[liii] [N.B. Baluchi conflict is enumerated for a third time here, accounting for three separate theaters.] Baluchistan is Pakistan’s energy (gas and oil) colony, its nuclear weapons testing ground, and its territory along the strategic coast of the Arabian Sea, which includes the port city of Gwadar, where there is a major naval base. Pakistan and China together are about to build a land bridge from Gwadar to China, circumventing the problems attached to ocean shipping.^[liv] Obviously, Pakistan has some conflicting allegiances.

But as an official GWOT ally, Pakistan enjoys American military and political support, as it also attacks numerous tribes of indigenous *Pashtuns* [11], who inhabit the mountainous North West Frontier Province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA - which includes North and South Waziristan), along the border of Afghanistan, in a continuing mission to search out and destroy Taliban and al-Qaeda insurgents.^[lv] Pashtuns have never accepted Punjabi domination in the Pakistani experiment, ever since independence from India in 1947, and for them, the Taliban are considered ideological authorities. They want to live under tribal and Shari’a law and order, not Punjabi military dictatorship. They do not want to rule the world.

Fourth World struggles also continue in the regions Pakistan calls the Northern Areas and Azad Kashmir. The violence coincides with the irredentist war of Muslim Kashmiris who want liberation from Hindu India and unification with Muslim Pakistan, and it involves Muslim and Pakistani military repression of indigenous Buddhist *Ladhakis* [12]^[lvi] and Hindu *Pandits* [13].^[lvii] And in addition, Pakistan is increasingly violent in its treatment of indigenous Hindu *Sindhis* [14],^[lviii] near the southeast border with India. There are no clear American Jokers in Pakistan, at least this year. But there just might be a few Indian Jokers.

South Asia

India's position in Great Power relations has shifted since the days of the Cold War, when it alternated between roles as a major Soviet ally and as leader of the Third World "Non-Aligned Movement." India is presently the object of a triangular courtship – being offered competing favors (especially in the form of nuclear and military hardware and outsourced high-tech jobs) by Russia and the United States, while warily attempting to contain, without being contained by China, with whom its uncertain border remains unstable. India's geography makes it the key-stone of a power arc stretching across southern Asia, and gives it the potential for exercising some control of Indian Ocean sea-lanes – through which Chinese (and Japanese and Korean) energy supplies must pass. Whoever wins the Indian courtship gains an advantage, therefore, in relation to China.[lix] If India has a Great Power rival, it is China,[lx] and that rivalry is then translated to the more momentous nuclear standoff with Pakistan (China's ally).

Although it possesses a large military force with advanced weaponry (including nuclear missiles), the Indian state has never yet been strong enough to build its way out of endemic poverty, nor to stamp out the incessant Type I Civil War of Maoist *Naxalites*,[lxi] nor the various rebellions of indigenous *Adivasis* [15][lxii] ("Scheduled Tribes") throughout the country (especially in zones slated for hydroelectric, mining, and large-scale development projects), nor the Fourth World wars that have been active hot spots since independence from Great Britain, in 1947.

Clearly, the most important of India's internal conflicts is in *Kashmir*, enumerated above as an irredentist war, which coincides with Fourth World (*Ladakhi* and *Pandit*) struggles. Kashmir validates India's place in the GWOT, given that indigenous Muslim Kashmiri liberation fighters are allegedly supported by both al-Qaeda and the Pakistani government. Kashmir is widely understood as a flash-point with Pakistan, given its repeated history as a battlefield and its ongoing potential to ignite a nuclear exchange that would have global repercussions. Meantime, Islamist militants and terrorists are certainly active within India's huge Muslim population, but as elsewhere, they have no military capabilities to speak of, and compared to Pakistan and China, they explain very little about India's military and nuclear arms race.

Equally destructive as Kashmir have been the wars of northeast India, which are all Fourth World self-determination struggles that may appear conjoined but in fact are a spectrum of distinct peoples and battlefronts. The *Naga* [16][lxiii] war is in ceasefire mode, at this time of writing, but it is a time-bomb that can be predicted to explode again at any moment, and will likely do so within the year. On the other hand, warfare is current in *Tripura* [17],[lxiv] *Mizoram* [18],[lxv] *Manipur* [19],[lxvi] and *Assam* [20][lxvii] (which has a second distinct struggle in its *Bodoland* [21] district).[lxviii]

If there are Jokers played in these wars, it is possible they come in the form of Christian missionaries, especially Baptists,[lix] who have no particular love for the imperial Hindu state and its repression of their indigenous proselytes. Also, chances are good the Joker involves Chinese state influence - which is related to Pakistan, through which China would like to build that land bridge to bypass the problems associated with ocean transit. Also, China might be interested in a tit-for-tat exchange, due to India's long-term asylum provided to the Dalai Lama, and therefore its implicit involvement in Tibet.

Locked in Hindu India's armpit, Muslim **Bangladesh** presents another theater for both GWOT and Great Power conflicts. There is an active Islamist movement in the country, and it occasionally attacks the Muslim government, as well as various other points of social tension. But more important is the tension with India over expansion of the Muslim Bengali population beyond the country's borders into India's state of Assam, where they have been involved as antagonists in the ongoing war of liberation (cited above). India is building a border wall and fence to keep Bengalis out. China is giving Bangladesh military assistance and other aid.[lxx]

Bengali population encroachment is also the central issue in the ongoing Buddhist *Jumma / Chakhma* [22] liberation struggle, which has been active in the Chittagong Hills Tracts (CHT), since Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan, in 1971.[lxxi] Military occupation of the region continues today, eight years since a peace agreement was supposed to have put an end to open warfare. Military occupation qualifies as war for the United States, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Chittagong conflict is presently contained by military occupation and severe repression - and so, it qualifies as a one-sided war of the state against indigenous nations.[lxxii]

Off the coast of India's southern cone, **Sri Lanka** continues as the battlefield of one of the longest running and bloodiest of all current Fourth World wars. Since the devastation of much of their territory by the tsunami of December 2004, indigenous Hindu *Tamils* [23] have apparently paused in their war of liberation from Buddhist Sinhalese rule. But none of the pre-tsunami contradictions have been resolved, and warfare is likely to resume in the near future. Deposits of titanium ores along the northeast coast serve to guarantee at least one focus of conflict.

Stability in Sri Lanka is of common concern among Great Powers, due to its location along major sea-lanes. But it is ironic that Great Powers rarely associate Sri Lanka with the GWOT (despite the Sinhalese government's insistence), since the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were among the earliest of all insurgent organizations to perfect the use of suicide bombers. While the Sri Lankan government blames India for its problem with Tamils, China gives Sri Lanka military and economic assistance.[lxxiii]

Myanmar (Burma) also continues as the location of intractable Fourth World wars, and it may have the highest concentration of such conflicts anywhere on the planet. Apart from its Type I Civil War against and repression of the popular democracy movement, the military regime is waging war against indigenous *Chin* [24], *Kachin* [25], *Karen* [26], *Karenni* [27], *Mon* [28], *Shan* [29] and *Wa* [30] peoples,[lxxiv] in their respective territories, and also against *Naga* [31] refugees from India.[lxxv] If these peoples qualify as “terrorists,” it is only in defamations by the government, as they are not mentioned otherwise in the GWOT. On the other hand, they are clearly the fodder of Great Power struggle, given that China is the main patron of Myanmar’s government. The patronage is related to increasing Chinese (and Western) oil, gas, mining, and timber interests in the country. The US can be expected now to press for “regime change” in Myanmar, after having ignored the situation there for decades. It would not be surprising to find the Joker played in behalf of any or all of the indigenous nations, in this context.

Southeast Asia

Until the tsunami of December 2004, the conflict in *Aceh*,[lxxvi] at the north end of Sumatra, was one of the bloodiest Fourth World wars commonly misunderstood as a GWOT theater. The indigenous Acehnese had been fighting for independence from **Indonesia**, since its liberation from the Dutch empire in 1950, and they were aiming to follow **East Timor**’s successful (though terribly violent) path to statehood, which was finalized through United Nations membership in 2002. The tsunami put an apparent end to the fighting, by bringing in a huge international relief effort, an autonomy agreement with the government, and disarmament of Aceh’s main insurgent organization. The war had been associated with the GWOT, inasmuch as the Acehnese rejected the secularist agenda of the Indonesian experiment and demanded Islamic social order under Shari’a Law. But the cause of war was Indonesian empire, not al-Qaeda or Jemaah Islamiya.

Too soon to know whether the Aceh war is really over, it is worth noting that it was always a Great Power theater. Partly, this was due to the wealth of Sumatra’s oil and gas resources, a mainstay of Indonesia’s export economy. But more important is Sumatra’s location as the western shore of the Strait of Malacca, through which some 50 percent of world shipping must pass, including most of the oil from the Arabian Gulf imported by China, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. For Great Powers, the Strait of Malacca is considered one of the world’s most important strategic chokepoints, where an enemy’s supply lines might most easily be throttled. It is therefore little wonder that the United States permitted Indonesia’s military to attack the Aceh liberation movement for so long (in the name of the GWOT, since 2001), until the tsunami.

At the other (eastern) extreme of the vast Indonesian empire, in the Irian Jaya province on the western half of New Guinea, the indigenous Melanesian peoples of *West Papua* [32][lxxvii] continue their own war for independence. Having neither direct GWOT nor Great Power involvement, the insurgents are seriously outgunned and underpowered against the Indonesian armed forces. Conditions are best characterized in terms of military occupation and severe repression.[lxxviii]

Across the Strait of Malacca from Sumatra, on the neck of the Malay Peninsula, **Thailand** is at war with *Muslim Malays* [33] who inhabit the southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, Songkhla, and Narathiwat, and seek independence from Buddhist Thai control.[lxxix] The Muslim insurgency has been associated with the GWOT and al-Qaeda affiliates, such as Jemaah Islamiya, but it is clearly a Fourth World war that has roots in the aftermath of European decolonization of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Burma, and the irrational demarcation of Thailand’s southern borders to include Muslims who might have been more peacefully ruled by Malaysia. Regardless of its GWOT associations, the conflict is a Great Power theater, for the same reason that Aceh is – that is, being located on opposite sides of the strategic Strait of Malacca. In addition, there are important tin and tungsten resources within the indigenous territories, and these contribute to explaining the US support given to the Thai government.

Vietnam also occupies a strategic position - on the western shores of the South China Sea, with major shipping lanes to and from China and other East Asian states off its coast. There have been improvements in relations between Vietnam and the United States, since the days of the “American War,” over three decades ago, but the government is still ruled by communists, and that is the most important of several major impasses in the relationship. The Cold War may still be alive, but there are no serious allegations that Vietnam is a GWOT theater. However, it clearly remains a place of interest for Great Powers, due to its strategic location, and the particular location of the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay – which the United States would like to control again.[lxxx] Similarly, proximity to the Spratly and Paracel Islands (which are claimed by seven countries, including China, and are reportedly rich in oil) magnifies the importance of its location. And this in turn magnifies the importance of its Fourth World conflicts. Since the closing days of violence with the United States, and then Cambodia, and then China, Vietnam has been at war with indigenous largely-Christian *Montagnards* [34][lxxxii] who have occupied the highlands for millennia and are now being squeezed out by the ever-encroaching ethnic Vietnamese population. Similarly, ethnic Cambodian *Khmer Krom* [35][lxxxii] are enduring warlike repression in the south of Vietnam. And the same conditions must be noted for the *Hmong* [36],[lxxxiii] in conflict with the communist government of neighboring **Laos**.

On the other (eastern) side of the South China Sea, the **Philippines** continues to be the location of another Fourth World war that has its roots in ages past, most especially since independence from the United States (and Japan) at the end of World War II. The state has always been a largely Christian project, and its control of largely-Muslim Mindanao and other southern islands has been the source of conflict since long before al-Qaeda’s existence. Today, there is a ceasefire with the *Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)* in Mindanao, but war continues with small splinter organizations of the *Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)*,

including Abu Sayyaf, on both Mindanao and certain minor islands of the Sulu Archipelago (especially Basilan and tiny Jolo), and across strategic waterways to the nearby Muslim Malaysian province of Sabah, on the island of Borneo.

The **Moro** [37] liberation struggle is commonly associated with al-Qaeda and the GWOT, but it must be understood broadly as a Great Power theater focused on shipping lanes through and near the South China Sea. In this case, the local theater of the Sulu Archipelago involves movement through the Tapaan Passage, between the Sulu and Celebes seas. The United States was evicted from former bases in the Philippines (Clark Air Force Base, and the Subic Bay Naval Base), but now has returned to a highly strategic position that constrains Chinese movement in the region.[lxxxiv]

Also of note in the Philippines is the continuous repression of indigenous **Igorot** peoples on the north island of Luzon.[lxxxv] The Igorots are not associated with the GWOT or Great Power relations, but their struggles do reflect the relative strength and weakness of the state - which is also beset with an intractable low-intensity Type I Civil War waged by the New People's Army.[lxxxvi]

China

China may or may not intend, today, to become a Great Power rival of the United States, tomorrow. But current US development of weapons with which to fight China, tomorrow, according to the 15-20 year planning horizons identified in today's QDRs and Defense budgets, will likely generate that rivalry and impel it towards crisis, all intentions notwithstanding. China is, of course, developing its own weapons, but the expenditures amount to only about one-thirteenth of the American project,[lxxxvii] and capabilities today are relatively minimal, and they are not likely to change dramatically in relative proportion, tomorrow. In a fight, China would probably not be able to defend its vital shipping lanes through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, and would be easily defeated at chokepoints in the Strait of Malacca and Strait of Hormuz, not to mention lesser points like the Tapaan Passage (cited above).[lxxxviii] And there is no real chance that China will ever be able to mount an offensive in the Western Hemisphere. Chinese global hegemony, like an Islamic caliphate, is only a hallucination – albeit a useful one.

Today's greatest point of tension is, no doubt, **Taiwan** – which is not an indigenous Fourth World nation,[lxxxix] but rather a breakaway island province ruled by adversaries of the mainland Communist regime. *[Editor's Note: There are nine Fourth World nations that are the original occupants of the island. They are the **Ami** (131,845 pop.), **Atayal** (81,800 pop.) **Bunun** (37,922 pop.), **Paiwan** (62,110 pop.), **Puyuma** (8,792 pop.), **Rukai** (8,670 pop.), **Saisiyat** (3,939 pop.), **Tsou** (6,192 pop.) and **Yami** (4,044 pop.). Since 1945 Han Chinese have occupied the Island of Taiwan virtually eliminating the original nations' visibility in the world. Since the 1990s the Kuomintang (KMT) government has instituted constitutional changes recognizing these nine nations as the original peoples of Taiwan. Despite this legal change, confrontations between the Han government and the Taiwanese nations continue.]* Taiwan's potential for total independence and statehood is measured in the balance between China's clear intention to prevent fragmentation by military force, and the ambiguity of the United States – which may or may not want to play the Joker, depending on expedience. There have been strong voices in the United States that have advocated Taiwan's independence, since 1949. Taiwan's own impetuosity may force the United States to play its hand prematurely, and a major international crisis would ensue immediately, not in 20 years.

There are several other places where the Joker might be played, most notably in **Tibet**, **Inner Mongolia**, and the **Uyghur Autonomous Region** [38] (Xinjiang Province) - which is today the locus of China's most important Fourth World war and is associated in the GWOT.[xc] Indigenous Muslim Uyghurs, in rebellion against Chinese colonialism, are living mostly in conditions of military occupation and severe repression.[xci] However, Uyghur combatants were training at al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, at the time of the US occupation in 2001, and some were captured and imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay by American forces, who had no idea what kind of struggle the Uyghurs represented. The combatants have served to provide the United States and China an apparent common enemy in the GWOT, since both countries are targets for Islamist jihad.

But American interest in Uyghur liberation is comparable to interest in the Chechen war with Russia: the policy is ambiguous. On the one hand, the United States maintains a “One China” policy, and it officially opposes liberation movements of Taiwan, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians, and other Fourth World nations. On the other hand, it is useful to have a weapon with which to accuse China of human rights abuses, and to point out that Uyghur political leaders today are likely to be imprisoned and executed for “splittism,” especially since China enacted an Anti-Secession Law, in 2005. The ambiguity reflects understanding that Uyghur territory is of vital importance for China as an energy and minerals colony, a nuclear weapons testing area, and as the route of major oil pipelines from neighboring Kazakhstan.

As it is with Muslim Uyghurs, so it is with Buddhist **Tibetans**,[xcii] who are not associated with the GWOT. During the 1950s and beyond, the CIA sponsored and supported a Tibetan war for independence from China. Then, in the 1970s, the United States sold the Tibetans out, due to Cold War developments of Sino-Soviet rivalry and Richard Nixon's “opening” of normal relations with the Communist government.[xciii] Tibet, however, remains a potentially useful pawn for the United States, which is why the Dalai Lama is occasionally entertained at the White House – to demonstrate the inherent ambiguity of the official “One China” policy.[xciv]

China, like Russia and the United States, is largely responsible for its own problems with Fourth World peoples. As with Russia and the United States, the Chinese state and constitution are constructed around explicit language about “autonomy” and “self-determination” of indigenous nations.[xcv] As with Russia and the United States, the contradictions between ideology and practice have been instrumental in generating the liberation movements of Fourth World peoples whose experience is to be colonized. It may be convenient to blame external actors for playing Jokers, but duplicity serves to create its own reward, in the form of rebellion. At the least, therefore, it is clear that China’s claim to a place in the GWOT is tenuous, self-serving, and refutable.

Horn of Africa

In 2002, the United States quietly opened a major theater of GWOT operations, establishing the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA),[xcvi] with its base in **Djibouti** – a former French colony located at the southern end of the Red Sea. This location is also identifiable as the Bab el-Mandeb Strait - another of the world’s most important strategic chokepoints, from where it is possible to control shipping between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The chokepoint has major implications: Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, for example, would have a fourth major obstacle (besides the Bosphorus, Dardanelles, and Suez) between the Indian Ocean (and by extension, the Arabian Gulf) and its base in Ukraine. Oil tankers loading at Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, would have another obstacle (besides the Malacca Strait) on their way to China.

The CJTF-HOA mission is ostensibly to fight terrorism in nine countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Some of these countries have indeed been highlighted by singular terrorist strikes, perpetrated by individuals, including the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the attack of 2000 on the USS Cole, in Yemen, and chaos has been continuous in Somalia since 1991. Most all of the regional violence, however, can be best understood in terms of Fourth World conflict, rather than Islamist jihad. And in these terms, the purpose of the Task Force is reduced to implicit Great Power objectives.

In **Somalia**, the southern part of the country is beset with Type II Civil War, which pits various clans (some of them Islamist) against one another, attempting to control the state from the capital city of Mogadishu. The northwestern part of the country is a different story. **Somaliland** (the former British colony) broke free from the south, in 1991, and after passage through several violent episodes, has existed in relative peace and tranquility since then. Somaliland can be understood today as a Fourth World nation, dominated by Muslim Somali Isaaqs, who are not Islamist. The nation has achieved de-facto independence from the south - comparable to the situation of Kosovo in relation to Serbia-Montenegro (cited above).[xcvii]

Liberation is not a foregone conclusion, however, because whichever party wins control of the south will undoubtedly attempt to control the north, and if that happens, war is very predictable. The biggest present obstacle to statehood (which would bring UN membership to 195) has been the resistance posed by many African states and the African Union, which all fear that this “secession” (an inaccurate term of reference) will set off a series of similar events elsewhere. There is some substance behind this fear. Africa has many dominoes waiting to fall. The United States, on the other hand, appears ambiguous. Somaliland’s stability is beneficial for US control of the Bab el-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden, while providing an outlet to seaports for landlocked Ethiopia – which is a US ally in the GWOT, and the most powerful military force in the region.

Ethiopia has, for decades, attempted to crush the liberation movements of several Fourth World nations, including the **Oromo** [39],[xcviii] **Sidama** [40],[xcix] **Ogaden Somali** [41], [c] and **Anuak** [42][ci] - who occupy western Gambella, on the border of Sudan (where Chinese oil companies are exploring). Of these, the Oromo and Ogadeni struggles are by far the most significant, in terms of the GWOT and the magnitude of the challenge they present to the Ethiopian imperial state. Some Oromos are Muslims, as are virtually all Ogadenis, but they are all being treated as terrorists, whether or not they are motivated by Islamism. Severe repression characterizes their general condition, although both Oromos and Ogadenis have proven their ability to organize military attacks against government forces.[cii]

The CJTF-HOA supports the state,[ciii] given its pivotal position on the Horn and the fact that it is landlocked and dependent for access to the sea upon Somaliland, which is both stable and adjacent to Djibouti, where the Task Force is based. Since 2004, the Task Force has run a training base in Ethiopia, where it supports the military in its anti-terrorist operations (against Fourth World liberation movements). No Jokers in Ethiopia.

The question of genocide in the western region of **Darfur** [43] dominates media reports from **Sudan**,[civ] in early 2006, but most coverage explains neither the Fourth World war nor Great Power dimensions of the massive violence. The indigenous actors include the black Muslim Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa peoples, who are fighting for autonomy or total liberation.[cv] The state is ruled by Islamist Arabs, whose intent is to drive non-Arabs from Darfur.

Sudan came under US military attack, following the 1998 terrorist bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and since then has stood constantly accused of sponsoring terrorism. The government was at war, from 1956 to 2003, with indigenous nations of the south and center, namely the largely Christian Bantu **Dinka**, **Nuer** and **Nuba** peoples. These remain organized as the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A), which has received covert and overt US support and other international aid for many

bloody years.

Under a threat of sanctions and further military attack, the Sudanese government entered a ceasefire and autonomy agreement with the SPLM/A, in 2005, and now there is a scheduled referendum on total independence due to take place in 2008.[cvi] The SPLM/A is a part of Sudan's government, under terms of the 2005 agreement, but that is no guarantee that the referendum will fail. The US Joker could mean that Sudan will indeed disintegrate, and if it does, Darfur may join the south (which is now called "New Sudan") as another independent fragment. These events may develop sooner, and more violently, depending on the way things unfold with the coming intervention of United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Darfur, or following the anticipated statehood of Somaliland. (The addition of two more states would bring UN membership to 197.)

The Great Power dimension of Sudan's Fourth World wars and GWOT association can be understood as corollary to the intense petroleum development undertaken by China, India, and the West, mostly in southern and eastern Sudan, before 2001, and now in Darfur. China built the pipeline that runs from the southland north to the Red Sea, and now imports 50 percent of Sudan's output.[cvii] And on a 15-20 year horizon, China's potential as a rising power is directly related to its oil supplies.[cviii] So, Sudan's position is similar to Iran's: it is China's economic and political ally, covered as a state sponsor of international Islamic terrorism. To the degree that China depends for oil on Sudan's Islamist regime, the Joker becomes ever more attractive as an alternative US policy instrument, to disrupt that dependency and to contain China's power potential, and to do so in the name of human rights and self-determination – in contrast to the treatment of Oromos and Ogadenis, next-door in Ethiopia.

The Darfur conflict has spilled across the western border of Sudan into **Chad**, and particularly into the overlapping homelands of **Zaghawa**, **Masalit**, and other (mostly Muslim) indigenous peoples of the region. In Chad, the conflict does not appear as a Fourth World liberation struggle, but rather as a resumption of the Type II Civil War that characterized the country for decades. The endemic rivalry among communal contenders was supposed to have been contained, after the World Bank financed construction of the new (as of 2003) oil pipeline that runs from southwestern Chad, across Cameroon, to the Atlantic Ocean. Royalties from oil exports were supposed to have been directed into development of Chad's impoverished society and infrastructure, but due to corruption and violence, the revenue has been appropriated by the military regime. Now, with the added complication of thousands of refugees from Sudan, conflict is again intensifying between the state and various insurgent elements.[cix]

Chad is not often directly associated with the GWOT, though it is dominated by Muslims, like most of northern and western Africa. But it is a Great Power theater, due to its oil resources and China's interests in developing them.[cx] China recently agreed to an oil development project, and the war in Darfur spilled over into Chad. Call it coincidence. Since the southwestern pipeline is a Western (Exxon/ Chevron) project that originates in territories populated largely by indigenous Christian Saras, one might predict that Chad will follow Sudan as a falling domino, and that a southern entity will fragment from the north, in an effort framed by denial of oil to China.

In another theater of the CJTF-HOA mission, **Tanzania** has also been associated with the GWOT, mostly because of the 1998 terrorist bombing of the US embassy, in Dar es Salaam. But tensions had existed for decades between the government and the Muslim Shirazis who populate the island of **Zanzibar** [45],[cxi] which lies in the Indian Ocean, just offshore from Dar es Salaam. Were it not for the inclusion of Tanzania in the CJTF-HOA mission, the conflict might appear as just one more point of confrontation between Muslims and Christians. The Task Force brings Great Power objectives into relief, and in this case, Dar es Salaam appears as the ocean port and head of the Tanzania-Zambia Railroad (TaZaRa) - which was built by China, during the 1970s.

The TaZaRa's purpose was always related to extraction of minerals from the center of the continent. Although the bulk of the mineral wealth is represented by copper, which is mined in **Zambia** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the more important metal is cobalt, which has important military applications and is therefore considered "strategic and critical." There are relatively few sources of (military grade) cobalt anywhere on earth, and the United States has been involved previously in political and military operations focused on the DRC, specifically in the Katanga Province, where certain cobalt mines are located.[cxii] It may be a long way from Katanga to Zanzibar, but that is the route cobalt follows, and it explains in some part the CJTF-HOA deployment. China imports 90 percent of its cobalt from the DRC.[cxiii] Apart from the cobalt and copper, in the DRC, there is also substantial wealth in ores of columbium (a.k.a. niobium) and tantalum (together known as "col-tan" in the mining trade), both of which are also considered "strategic and critical" and are indispensable in many military applications, as well as throughout the electronics industries.

Other Theaters in Africa

Morocco is a critical actor in African Great Power games, due to its strategic location on the Strait of Gibraltar (controlling passage between the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea), and there is an active Islamist movement, which makes the Muslim country a GWOT theater - like Turkey, Bangladesh, and Algeria. The country also is an important Fourth World war theater, due to its very unresolved problem with the **Sahrawis** of Western Sahara, which Morocco colonized in 1975. The monarchy has continually refused to hold an independence referendum, despite the terms of the American-crafted "Baker Plan," which guaranteed the process.[cxiv] There is a good chance that war will resume, if the referendum does not take place soon. But

Morocco is a GWOT ally and a Great Power theater. So no Joker, this year.

In comparison, **Nigeria** is also a GWOT and Great Power theater, and has been similarly beset with Fourth World wars, especially in the southeast part of the country, which is populated mainly by black Christian indigenous peoples (*Igbo, Ijaw, Ogoni, Itsekiri, et al.*) [tabulated here as one continuous theater - 46],[cxv] whose liberation movements date from the time of Nigeria's independence from Britain. Since then, southeast Nigeria has been taken over by oil development, which has financed the state's domination by Muslims (Hausa and Fulani) of the north, who have historically ruled through military force, since the British departed, in 1960. Inter-communal violence between Christians and Muslims has recently flared, coincident with acts of war against government forces and oil companies in the southeast. Strangely enough, the recent wave of violence follows on the heels of a new major investment by China in Nigerian oil development[cxvi]- which follows on the heels of China's new oil deals and the subsequent violence in Chad (cited above), which follows on similar events in Sudan and Iran.

Could yet another coincidence fall into place? After investing in Nigeria, in early 2006, China's ministers moved on to **Senegal**, to discuss development in the oil patch located in the southern Casamance Province - which has been a Fourth World war theater, also for decades, since independence days of 1960. Like the governments of Iran, Sudan, and Chad, the government of Senegal is dominated by Muslims, and the indigenous (*Diola*) [47] people of Casamance are mostly Christians. When Christian indigenous peoples fight for liberation from Muslim states, is it still the GWOT? Almost exactly coincident with the Chinese oil deal, violence broke out again in Casamance, where there was supposed to have been a ceasefire and resolution of war.[cxvii]

And more. China is aggressively pursuing oil development in **Angola**[cxviii] (which has imposed a military occupation in the breakaway oil-rich *Cabinda* province [48][cxix]), and in **Algeria** (which still represses indigenous *Berbers* [49][cxx]), and elsewhere in Africa, where China generally does not make respect for human rights a condition on its economic involvement,[cxxi] and where Fourth World conflicts are intensifying.

Conclusion: The Unipolar Moment Reconsidered

This survey of world violence is not comprehensive. While it accounts for most of the current shooting wars observed in 2006, and for most identifiable theaters of the GWOT, it hardly begins to enumerate all known cases of Fourth World independence movements or Great Power theaters. The trend that is most obvious speaks for itself: Of some 63 identifiable shooting wars in 2006, 49 of them can be categorized as Fourth World liberation struggles. This trend conforms to a pattern revealed in other similar war surveys. In 1987, during the Cold War context, Nietschmann found 86 of 120 wars in the same category.[cxxii] And in 2001, on the eve of the GWOT (as it turned out), this author counted 52 out of 83 wars, also in the same category.[cxxiii] There is little doubt that Fourth World war continues to dominate all other types of armed conflict and global violence. The most easily inferred explanation is that the process of decolonization simply has not been concluded, and that liberation ideology continues, all around the world.

The evidence revealed in this survey has further implications, and they concern the pattern in which Fourth World wars continue to be hijacked as the fodder of Great Power games. In 2006, this pattern is at least as evident in the GWOT as it was during the Cold War. While it is important here to identify the underlayment of Fourth World wars, it is equally important now to call the Great Power game.

The game in its present form starts in 1991. That was the original "unipolar moment," when the United States faced a big choice: whether to attempt global military hegemony - to initiate a permanent Pax Americana - or to accept a multipolar configuration of world power. The debate from those early New World Order years was never conducted or resolved in public. Instead, the impact of QDRs and Defense budgets that were laid out, about 15 years ago, is left to be inferred, today. Given the time horizons that are typical, we are now witness to the plans acted upon back then. The GWOT has done little to change much, except for the context and cover story.

End the charade, and here's the game: China is the enemy (the QDR says so),[cxxiv] especially if in alliance with Russia, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Nigeria, and other states identified in this essay. In 15-to-20 years, if China does acquire the kind of power projected by QDRs today, there will indeed be a moment of major confrontation for the next generation to contend with, and all the weapons being built today for that moment will be deployed. That means, if China is to be prevented from acquiring power, tomorrow, there are things that must happen, today. Strategic chokepoints and sea-lanes and oil resources and metal ore deposits. Take control of as much as possible, today, starting in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa.

As for all those "terrorists?" They never had the capabilities to be more than a big deadly nuisance, but they did provide a good cover story - for as long as it lasted.

And for the Fourth World? The pending independence and statehood of Palestine, Kosovo, Montenegro and Somaliland should serve as bellwethers of the approaching tsunami.

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/03/politics/03archives.html?th&emc=th>

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