

*Nineteenth Annual
York Centre for International and
Security Studies Conference*

*The Study and Practice of Security
Today*

519 & 7th Floor Lounge, York Research Tower
York University, Toronto
9 February 2012

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Thursday, 9 February 2012

9:15 – 10:50 Panel I

519 YRT Moderator: David Mutimer

The Geopolitics of the War on Terror in Africa

Farid Omar

The War on Terrorism and Regional Security in the Horn of Africa

Abbas Gnamo

CSR and the DRC: Corporate Social Responsibility and Conflict Minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Vanisha Sukdeo

Reflections on the Water and Environmental Disputes in South Asia: What is the Best Strategy for Peaceful settlement?

Zaglul Haider

11:00 – 12:30 Panel II

519 YRT Moderator: Karine Cote-Boucher

Counterinsurgency: Devolution and Expulsion as Techniques of Social Control in Networked Security Governance

Tracey Leigh Dowdeswell

Unsettled Waters: The Arrival of Tamil Asylum Seekers

Harini Sivalingam

Regenerating the Settler Nation State: Spatial Power from the Reserve System to Guantanamo Bay

Jen Preston

Canada, Liminality and the Construction of the Terrorist Threat in the US

Richard Baker

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

7th Floor Lounge, York Research Tower

1:30 – 3:00
519 YRT

Panel III

Moderator: Kole Kilibarda

Afghanistan as a Borderless Border State

Sergei Plekhanov

Iraqi Sovereignty Between the Constitution and U.S.-Iraqi Strategic Agreements

Ruba Ali Al-Hassani

Partisans of Sea and Air: How Asymmetric Warfighting Can Transform Naval & Aerial Warfare

Farzin Nadimi

3:10 – 4:45
519 YRT

Panel IV

Moderator: Mark Neufeld

NATO's new Strategic Concept and its role as the Preeminent Vehicle of Global Crisis Management

Mathew Morgan

Polytheistic Approach to Understanding the Imperial Agenda of the US and NATO's Reconstruction of Afghanistan

Matt Dow

Militarism as a Province of Accumulation: Testing Luxemburg's hypothesis in the Canadian context during the Global War on/of Terror

Michael Skinner

Guys in Caves: Into the Underworld of the Cold War that Never Ends

Edwin Janzen

5:00 – 7:30

Reception

7th Floor Lounge, YRT

Abstracts

Panel I

The Geopolitics of the War on Terror in Africa

States within the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions have emerged as the critical ``frontlines`` in the new global conflagration focused on the threat of terrorism. This paper will examine the connections between the US-led counter terrorism measures in Africa, emerging geopolitical interests and attempts by ``frontline`` African regimes to regain and maintain a ``new strategic relevance`` as well as the political, security and humanitarian implications for Africa.

Farid Omar

Visiting Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

The War on Terrorism and Regional Security in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is known for political instability related to numerous interstate wars and intrastate conflicts over several decades which led to repression, massive displacements, state collapse and widespread poverty including acute food shortage. This sub-region has seen the creation of new states (Eritrea, Southern Sudan) and the Somaliland autonomous authority, though not recognized as independent, and the internationalization of the Somali civil conflict due to state failure and a war on terror mainly targeting radical Islamists called Al-Shabaab- which is officially associated with Al-Qaeda over the last few years. Although terrorist activities were reported in earlier decades, it became an important issue after the simultaneous and spectacular bombings of the two USA Embassies in Eastern Africa in 1998 and it took on a new dimension in the aftermath of 9/11. The Horn of Africa has evolved as one of major fronts of the war against terror involving and rallying regional states like Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, and Ethiopia and consequently closer military ties between these states. The presentation will analyze the dynamics and evolution of the war on terrorism, the ``securitization`` of Islam and the impact of the alliance on inter-state relations as well as regional security, mutual intervention as well as domestic political landscape including human rights, democracy and governance.

Abbas Gnamo

Visiting Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

CSR and the DRC: Corporate Social Responsibility and Conflict Minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo

This paper argues that the most critical issue in international security and criminal law today is the lack of regulation in the processing and transportation of minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The processes by which minerals have been mined in the DRC in cruel conditions need to be reformed. The role of corporations in the conflict minerals trade needs to be examined as corporate social responsibility (CSR) needs to hold corporations accountable. The paper will demonstrate that the section in the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* on conflict minerals does not go far enough.

Vanisha H. Sukdeo
PhD Candidate, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Reflections on the Water and Environmental Disputes in South Asia: What is the Best Strategy for Peaceful settlement?

The goal of this presentation is to focus upon Indian unilateral construction of structures at the upstream of the common international rivers between the two neighboring countries, India and Bangladesh. In South Asia, the Indian unilateral construction and regulation of the Farakka barrage has severely affected 37% of the total area and 33% of the population of Bangladesh who are dependent on the *Ganges* basin. India has also proposed to implement a new river linking Project, to interlink 37 rivers to divert waters from one basin of a river to another and thus solving the water crisis in the draught affected regions. This will seriously threaten the very existence of Bangladesh, because 80% of its annual fresh water supply comes as a trans-boundary inflow through 54 common rivers. India further initiated construction of the *Tipaimukh Hydraulic Dam* (THD) located 500 m. downstream from the confluence of the *Barak* for the generation of Hydro-electric powers. The *Barak* is an international river and its tributaries are the *Surma* and the *kushiara* rivers of Bangladesh. The *Surma* River feeds the mighty *Meghna* River which flows through Bangladesh. The THD will seriously damage the ecology, economy and livelihood of millions in Bangladesh. This presentation argues that by any standard Indian actions already caused environmental terrorism and its attempts further threatening the very existence of Bangladesh. In order to combat these with international law, peaceful settlement is the only option. Given the power balance of India a third party settlement is the best strategy for sustainable development of the region.

Zaglul Haider
Visiting Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Panel II

Counterinsurgency: Devolution and Expulsion as Techniques of Social Control in Networked Security Governance

This paper will critically examine the techniques of counterinsurgent warfare, the neoliberal ideologies which lie behind these techniques, and the influences of globalization and privatization, in order to demonstrate the neo-colonial forms of social ordering which COIN warfare produces within its target population. Target populations are no longer to be governed as colonial 'subjects' in a defined territorial space, but are to be expelled from the universe of legitimate political action and expression. Together, devolution and expulsion have emerged as the prime techniques of social control in the networked form of security governance that has grown up in the wake of 911.

Tracey Leigh Dowdeswell
PhD Candidate, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Unsettled Waters: The Arrival of Tamil Asylum Seekers

Borders have become a key battleground in the governance of security since 9-11, which facilitated and legitimized the process of restricting migration of racialized groups into the Western hemisphere. Asylum processes are viewed by conservative elements of society as a weak and often risky link in Canadian migration policy. Using the cases of the Tamil boat arrivals via the MV Ocean Lady in October 2009 and MV Sun Sea in August 2010, this paper will examine how deeply this security-conscious ideology has become entrenched and infused into dominant discourses concerning refugee protection and humanitarianism.

Harini Sivalingam
PhD Candidate, Socio-Legal Studies, York University

Regenerating the Settler Nation State: Spatial Power from the Reserve System to Guantanamo Bay

This paper analyzes the case of Omar Khadr, the Canadian citizen held at Bagram prison and then at Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, since the age of fifteen, on charges of being an alien enemy combatant in the U.S. War on Terror. Through Khadr's case, and specifically through the Canadian settler nation-state's abandonment of Khadr to the transnational space of exception of Guantanamo Bay, this work traces some of the historical shifts in how spaces of exception are used and where they are located. The notion of 'states of exception' as theorized by Giorgio Agamben, provides a "spatial theory of power" (Ek, 2006, p.364), which locates the power of the sovereign in their ability to suspend law and order. As Khadr's case illustrates, these abandoned people are not simply set inside or outside of the judicial order, but come to physically illustrate the power of the sovereign to decide "on the value or non-value of life" (Agamben, 1998, p.142). Thus, extra-territorial and transnational spaces of exception are systematically implicated in processes of nation building and national regeneration through the exercise of the sovereign power to abandon. This process allows for the 'real' citizens or political subjects to be simultaneously identified and reified as bodies to be protected. A historicized analysis of spatialized settler colonialism in Canada (focusing on the site of the 'Indian' reserve) will be discussed in relation to the "colonial present" (Gregory, 2004), and more specifically to the 'war on terror' and Khadr's case.

Jen Preston
PhD Candidate, Social and Political Thought, York University
Graduate Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Canada, Liminality and the Construction of the Terrorist Threat in the United States

Following 9/11, US news coverage increasingly framed Canada as a threat to US security. Arguing from a critical geopolitics perspective, the paper explores how this specification of Canadian threat was rendered believable through an accompanying discourse that situated Canada within an ambiguous notion of the American self. This intertwining of threat and liminality served to instantiate the threat of terror in the American heartland. In this sense, Canada functioned as a local proxy for the terrorist other; it acted to collapse the time and space that might otherwise have insulated Americans from the threat of terror.

Richard Baker

Margaret and Wallace McCain Postdoctoral Fellow in International Relations, Mount Allison University

Panel III

Afghanistan as a Borderless State

Afghanistan is a typical border state whose emergence, historical evolution and current status have been shaped by interactions between competing empires and/or great powers. In times of imperial decay or a balance of power between empires, Afghanistan's degree of sovereignty would usually grow. In other times, one or another empire would be strong enough to establish its hegemony over Afghanistan. Formed at the intersection of imperial borders, Afghanistan has usually been treated by neighbouring states either as a bridgehead for imperial expansion or as a problematic neighbor to be watched and controlled to prevent expansion of a rival power. Further complicating the exercise of Afghan sovereignty and settling border disputes is multiethnic composition of society, another legacy of the country's border status. Most ethnicities in Afghanistan have tribal or cultural ties with neighbouring states, and of the total population of the country's core ethnic group, the Pashtuns who formed the Afghan state in 1747, 2/3 live in Pakistan. At present, occupied by NATO and having an extremely weak governmental structure, Afghanistan is more virtual than real as a state, and its future continues to depend largely on the decisions of outside powers. Future scenarios include possible partition along ethnic lines, but if Afghanistan is to be reserved in its current borders and if those borders – and Afghan sovereignty - are to become more real, it would require a strong multilateral effort by the neighbouring states and Great Powers, working closely with representative Afghan political actors, to implement a regional settlement through which Afghan sovereignty could be restored and guaranteed by others as an essential condition of regional security.

Sergei Plekhanov
Department of Political Science, York University
Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Iraqi Sovereignty Between the Constitution and U.S.-Iraqi Strategic Agreements

In 2004 the U.N.S.C. passed Resolution 1546, recognizing Iraq as a sovereign state. However since elected in 2010, the Iraqi government has demonstrated weakness in its capacity to effectively exercise political sovereignty. My dissertation examines the gap between Iraqi de jure and de facto sovereignty, and defines the nature of Iraqi sovereignty as traceable in three legal documents: 1) the Iraqi Constitution, 2) the Status-of-Forces-Agreement (S.O.F.A.), and 3) the Strategic Framework Agreement (S.F.A.). The S.F.A. and S.O.F.A. motivated Iraqi officials to push for full monopoly of Iraqi armed forces, for jurisdiction over foreign troops on Iraqi soil, and for restrictions on the role of hired contractors. The two strategic agreements formally codified relations between Iraq and the United States for the first time since the 2003 invasion, and set the date for the recent withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. The S.F.A. now determines future relations between the two states and inspires Iraqi foreign relations, while the current political turmoil is yet to be resolved.

Ruba Ali Al-Hassani,
PhD Candidate, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Partisans of Sea and Air: How Asymmetric Warfighting Can Transform Naval & Aerial

Warfare

The concept of asymmetric warfare is nothing new. However, new methods of warfare and emergence of military technological superpowers since the beginning of the 20th Century have influenced the way asymmetric warfare is employed – opening a whole new range of possibilities. This presentation will examine the particular application of asymmetric warfighting culture in naval and air warfare, taking Iran as a case study. During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980 to 1988 – the longest conventional war of the 20th Century – the armed forces of Iran – particularly the Revolutionary Guards – developed a warfighting doctrine in accord with the country's revolutionary ideology. Based on Shiite religious concepts, the doctrine reflects Iran's Alavi and Ashurai heritage. This presentation will analyze application of revolutionary Shiite values such as stoic endurance and devotion to the cause, to such modern aspects of modern warfare, especially compared to the more traditional land warfare. I argue that in the Iranian concept of Alavi and Ashurai warfare, readiness to die is not considered a substitute for lethality and effectiveness, but on the contrary, it relies on high-tech weaponry and innovative tactics – a combination employed to great effect on the ground in southern Lebanon by Iran's ally and protégé, the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah, in its war with Israel in the summer of 2006. I will also offer some detailed historical and modern-day technological examples of the application of asymmetric tactics in the Iranian way of warfare, and its possible effects on the Western powers' application of technology-centric warfare.

Farzin Nadimi

Visiting Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Panel IV

NATO's new Strategic Concept and its role as the Preeminent Vehicle of Global Crisis Management

NATO has assumed a role as the preeminent vehicle of global crisis management, a role that was affirmed in its new Strategic Concept, enacted in November 2010. The War on Terror has provoked a shift in NATO's primary focus. NATO is now actively seeking to predict new threats, and to manage emerging ones before they directly attack a member state. Recent trends within NATO further blur the distinction between the international and domestic and force us to reconsider how we conceive of security.

Mathew Morgan

PhD Candidate, Political Science

Graduate Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Polytheistic Approach to Understanding the Imperial Agenda of the US and NATO's Reconstruction of Afghanistan

The purpose of this paper is to develop an immanent critique of the Sorelian animating social myth that the reconstruction of Afghanistan is to transform the region from a so-called 'failed terrorist state' to a 'liberal democratic state.' This perspective has been defended by various US and NATO military strategists, neo/realists and neo/liberals that dominate the security studies literature which advocate that military intervention is legitimate in the context of Afghanistan. The presentation will illustrate

that an alternative interpretation is needed in understanding the reconstruction of Afghanistan as consistent with a larger imperial project by the US and NATO countries. The presentation will draw on research by critical scholars to understand a more polytheistic approach to analysing the reconstruction of Afghanistan which is not present within the mainstream security studies literature.

Matt Dow
M.A. Political Science, York University

Militarism as a Province of Accumulation: Testing Luxemburg's hypothesis in the Canadian context during the Global War on/of Terror

Rosa Luxemburg (1913) opened her thesis "Militarism as a Province of Accumulation" with the statement: "Militarism fulfils a quite definite function in the history of capital, accompanying as it does every historical phase of accumulation". In this presentation I explore whether the current stage of Canadian militarism fulfils a "definite function" in the context of Globalization and the Global War on/of Terror.

Michael Skinner
Graduate Fellow, York Centre for International and Security Studies

Guys in Caves: Into the Underworld of the Cold War that Never Ends

In 2010, I installed my University of Ottawa MFA thesis exhibition, "Guys in Caves," at the Diefenbunker, a massive decommissioned nuclear shelter in Carp, Ontario—today a Cold War museum. Comprised of four site-specific, multimedia installations, my exhibition invited visitors to descend both into the physical underworld of the Diefenbunker itself and also into a figurative underworld of the militarized mind. The exhibition traced links between our society's defensive posture during the Cold War and the similar posture our society has assumed with the so-called War on Terror of the past decade.

Edwin Janzen
MFA, University of Ottawa
Visual Artist, Montreal