Theories of International Relations and the Private Security Analyst: The Scope and Limits of Theoretically Informed Analysis

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by

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Abstract

This thesis addresses a significant yet relatively neglected problem: the inadequacy of risk assessment methods of analysis currently available to security analysts and practitioners serving customers operating in challenging and volatile environments. It also challenges the idea shared by many analysts that theories of International Relations (IR) are irrelevant to the production of security analyses. Towards this end, this thesis begins by exploring the relationship between existing forecasting techniques and theories of IR. It then evaluates the extent to which their use has the potential to expand the analytical capabilities of private security analysts serving corporate customers in such contexts. In considering the possibilities and limitations of IR approaches the thesis finds that Realism alone cannot provide a valid framework to improve private security analysts' skills, but argues that there are definite advantages to combining this with Constructivism complemented by cultural analysis. These three theoretical components constitute the backbone of an innovative approach to security analysis herein termed *Reflexive Cultural Realism*; a theory of security designed to explain politically-driven security events in particular social and cultural contexts whilst allowing for forecasting based on an original way of building scenarios. This theory is applied through a specific *reading grid* (via a 7-step method) at all levels of political activity, from the global to the domestic. Two detailed case studies are provided to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Reflexive Cultural Realism approach. These case studies, located in two of the GCC countries, consider security situations analysts are traditionally confronted with in their daily activities, and demonstrate the utility of the approach in facilitating practical answers to corporate questions. The thesis concludes that the Reflexive Cultural Realism approach, by combining an innovative theoretical framework with a robust application method, is able to satisfy the demands of corporate customers by improving significantly the analytical and forecasting skills of the analysts serving them.

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ADWEC	Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Company
AIC	Advanced Industrial Countries
ALARP	As Low as Reasonably Practicable
API	American Petroleum Institute
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ASIS	American Society of Industrial Security
BDM	Bueno de Mesquita
CPP	Certified Protection Professional
CRG	Control Risks (Group)
DCN	Direction des Constructions Navales
DGA	Direction Générale de l'Armement
DGSE	Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure
DUSUP	Dubai Supply Authority
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FP	Foreign Policy
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
FPDM	Foreign Policy Decision Making
FPE	Foreign Policy Executive
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IHS	IHS Jane's 360
IIF	International Institute of Forecasters
IJV	International Joint Venture
IR	International Relations
IRIS	Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MNC	Multi National Corporation
MOD	Ministry of Defence
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOC	Oman Oil Company
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCI	Professional Certified Investigator
PSP	Physical Security Professional
QP	Qatar Petroleum
RCR	Reflexive Cultural Realism
SONATRACH	Société Nationale pour la Recherche, la Production, le Transport, la Transformation, et la Commercialisation des Hydrocarbures (Algeria)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US	United States
VNSA	Violent Non State Actors

Chapter 1

Introduction

Twelve years ago, I was offered a position as a security consultant for a large French company which maintained stealth frigates sold by the French government to the Saudi navy in the military port of Jeddah, on the Red Sea. Deployed as the leader of a duo of security consultants, part of my brief was to forecast what would happen to the Saudi-French maintenance contract should King Fahd meet an earlier than expected demise. Although rapidly convinced by my observations and readings that no major changes would occur, and that prince (soon to become king) Abdullah had the situation well in hand, I realised that I did not have the necessary tools to convey my beliefs to my senior management. I had no real method to rely upon, no understanding of the motives behind political actions, no cultural familiarity with the Arab world and no serious knowledge of modern international relations[1]. I was not a trained analyst, simply a security practitioner, but I developed an interest, almost a fascination, for international affairs whose origins lie in this long past, but not forgotten, immense intellectual frustration.

I have since fulfilled several roles in the corporate security industry, mainly in the Middle East where I still live and work. I have become a specialist in the area of security risk assessments (risk assessments developed for plant, facilities, headquarters, etc.) and have been faced time and again with the same demands; forecasting undesired security events, anticipating unexpected situations, preparing evacuation plans while recommending responsible mitigation measures to ensure the security of expatriate personnel deployed abroad.

To do this, I use existing methods. Risk and threat analysis methods are numerous in the industrial world. The American Petroleum Industry (API 780 methodology, 2013) is the one I use on a daily basis, but others exist authored by Biringer, Vellani, Garcia, and many

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[1] Although I graduated in 1979 from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Internationales de Paris, but this was of no help whatsoever.

other risk assessment authorities. Yet, these methods are oriented towards a *process* and as such fail to convince me. In spite of delivering a methodical and well-structured progression, they base their approach on judgement calls presented, thanks to the power of arithmetic, as scientific truths, while they are simply guesstimates. How do these methods measure the threats? Essentially, they project past constituents of a threat into the future. They usually define the threat (threat-as-agent) by listing events under headings such as intention, motivation and capabilities, a triangle inspired from the crime triangle. These headings suggest that intention and motivation are obvious and that capabilities are a logical inference from the seizure of weapons, explosives and terrorist paraphernalia discovered by the police. This is what analysts I have interviewed call the context. This may be acceptable in professional circles, but I maintain that expressing concepts such as intention and motivation without at least some sort of theoretical background weakens the power of the practitioners' conclusions. This is where the gap in understanding and in the existing literature is. As Bonnett highlights:

> Facts do not speak for themselves. They need to be analysed, explained and provided with a context. Otherwise, they are quite, literally meaningless. (Bonnett 2011: 4)

What is said of the facts can also be said of the context. Context needs to be explained and understood and this can only be done with the help of a theoretical background.

1. Threats, vulnerability and risk and the contribution of IR theories.

For the security analyst, the purpose of any analysis, in the public or private sector, is to expose and understand threats. In the industrial world, it can be threats to projects, threats to assets and threats to people. These threats, when measured against the vulnerability of the asset, point toward risks. These risks in turn can be defined as the level of uncertainty to achieve objectives. They are often expressed in terms of a ratio between the consequences of an event and the likelihood of its occurrence.

In the private sector, risk is defined by the possibility of threats materialising to prevent the development of the project. Threats, in turn, are defined by the API 780 methodology[2]

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[2]Security Risk Assessment Methodology for the Petroleum and Petrochemical Industries, ANSI/API Standard 780, First Edition, May 2013.

as 'any indication, circumstance or event with the potential to cause the loss of, or damage to an asset. Threat can also be defined as the intention and capability of an adversary to undertake actions that would be detrimental to critical assets' (API 780 2013: X). Let us substitute critical assets with 'project' and we have a fair indication of what the expectations of the corporate customer can be as well as a sound professional objective for the private security analyst.

The threats between the public and the private sector differ. Threats in the private sector include actions such as embezzlement, fraud, theft, sabotage and vandalism, to name a few, all crimes that hardly connect with politics. For these crimes, the corporate sector hardly needs the services of a security analyst. It is when these threats connect with politics and its implications, in places perceived as volatile and fraught with dangers, that the contribution of the private security analyst becomes invaluable.

It is therefore only a portion of the threat that links the analyst and the corporate customer. These are what the security practitioner calls the low frequency-high consequences type of events. The corporate security customer wants to know how politically motivated actions can have an impact on their industrial setup. Threats (threats-as-action) motivated by a political purpose to projects will come from groups opposing them from a political perspective. These groups (threats-as-agents) will lead their opposition campaigns through actions, which make sense only when understood as the result of political decisions modelled by social constructs, which in turn have become normative behaviours and can be analysed and reconstructed by the analyst for the benefit of their client.

Opposition groups (tribal, clannish or simply of interest) exist to defend, represent or promote the interest of their members, and as such, their behaviour is political. Principles of IR theories do apply to them, at least to some extent. To say that the Kurdish question is an IR problem is an acceptable assertion, but approaching it only from an IR perspective while ignoring domestic politics (of Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran which harbour their populations) would be misleading because it is incomplete.

Threats (as-actions) may take different forms according to the nature of the project, but how these threats could develop and could materialise and under which circumstances is certainly of the utmost importance to the customer. The 'why' answer cannot be explained outside of a political framework, which now becomes the background reference for the security analyst.

In the world of corporate security, risk assessment is the first step of any project study. A risk assessment normally comprises five stages: (1) a characterisation of the target (2) a threat assessment (3) a vulnerability assessment (4) a risk evaluation and (5) a risk treatment plan.

Of all these stages, the most delicate and the most determinant is, again, the threat assessment. Why? Because threats and vulnerability determine risk and risk is what the corporate customer wants to understand.

This is a stage where the security consultant must evaluate the plausible threats according to a mix of past incidents, current trends, plausible attacks and often their own experience and background. But, because threat assessments are usually performed without the revealing background of a theory, and because a historical approach will rather discuss the events, the 'how-it-occurred' rather than the reasons behind the events (the 'why-it-happened') they often look like a military debrief and do not fulfil their explanatory role the Thucydides way[3].

The mission in Jeddah pushed me towards international policy studies; and I took up studies at post-graduate level to help me conceptualise what I felt intuitively would be the response to a quest.

Working on my master's thesis convinced me that Realist principles were directly applicable to regions of intense political and power rivalry. Influence and power, in such places, were perceived as zero-sum games, making political actions relatively easy to anticipate (predictable), at least in theory. Soft and hard powers, coupled with balancing strategies, were used in a complementary manner to ensure the existence and security of

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[3] Chapter 1 Book 1 of the History of the Peloponnesian war is a remarkable explanation of the political reasons behind this war.

the tiny Gulf States (at that stage, I had left Saudi Arabia for Qatar). The next logical step for me was to think how Realism, not only as a philosophy but also as an explanatory tool would provide an acceptable device to predict damaging actions.

Another, more self-interested motivation, in embracing this idea of political forecast in an industrial context was to improve, somehow, my professional life. As a professional risk assessor in corporate security, I am, like most of my colleagues, constantly battling with the issue of the threat that will determine the recommendations of any risk assessment. It is not that security professionals and methodologists have ignored the issue of threat, on the contrary: existing risk assessment methods provide tools to evaluate the threat, but these tools somehow appear unpersuasive. Threat evaluations, as they are performed currently, appear as the analyst's judgement call and not much else. The reason? An absence of theoretical support to justify what is perceived as emotional rationalisations. In other words, current methods neglect the political reasons behind actions, ignore the forces that result in action, focus on the scenarios and modus operandi and by doing so, remain at the process level, disregarding the primacy of political motivations behind the threats.

Understanding the capability offered by existing IR theories in understanding threats, measuring their limits, and addressing the consequent gap is what this thesis intends to achieve.

Now that the evaluation of security risks has become a permanent feature of my professional life, I realise that, in spite of the changes and upgrades in methodologies, the problems I faced twelve years ago remain identical in nature and demand even more pressing solutions. In this thesis I will contend that, without proper analytical skills embedded in solid political theories, the analyst (private or institutional) is condemned to convert educated guesses and emotional feelings into unconvincing assertions.

The solution to the problem does and does not lie with academia. There is no such thing as a degree in '*International security forecasting*' as there is in economics. As Caillaud, former deputy director of the IRIS[4] and current director of analysis for the French security

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[4] The *Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques* is a French think-tank created in 1991 based in Paris specialising in problems of geopolitics and strategy.

company Risk&Co, remarked in a discussion with the author:

> There is definitely a need [for forecasting to be integrated] in all the IR disciplines related to security. There is some training in defence and security, but none that provides any training in forecasting. The issue is also very important in ministries. A Colonel friend of mine, eventually followed training in prospective [forecasting] in the private sector. When he tried to apply the methods learnt to his analyses, someone higher in the hierarchy suggested amicably that it might be time for him to think about retirement. Prospective [forecasting] is on everybody's lips particularly at the DGA[5], but in reality, no methodology is proposed. (Caillaud, Interview 25 June 2013)

Yet, the solution lies somehow with academia, because it is only by studying international politics and IR theories that the analyst will be able to hone his analytical skills and that a forecasting competence will develop. My experience in the security industry, principally obtained abroad, convinced me of the necessity to tackle the issue of embedding a methodological approach within a conceptual framework that would reflect the reality of otherwise unintelligible circumstances.

Since then, I have met many security practitioners suffering from the same lack of method and theoretical support. Even professional consultancies clearly suffer from this absence. Methods are numerous in corporate security, but do theory-embedded methods exist? Caillaud, having two decades of experience in the analytical business, affirms that methods need to be discussed and outlined with the clients. I am afraid that this is not satisfactory. If the customer can claim to be a better analyst than the analyst because he has access to personal elements that the analyst will not be privy to, he cannot claim any competence in terms of analytical and forecasting techniques. The problem here is not really the method; a method is a succession of stages that take the analyst from the definition of the problem to a selection of probable scenarios to be acted upon, but the selection of items of information that will feed this method, and the nature of the theoretical background that gives value and relevance to these items.

Methods that are used in corporate security are quite rigid. The practitioners who use them sometimes render them more rigid than necessary. Saudi Aramco Industrial Security department, for example, which use the American Petroleum Institute methodology for

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[5] Délégation Générale de l'Armement.

security risk assessments, has adapted the method to their own requirements and has made the approach based essentially on a process, to make it practicable and usable by most security consultants working for them. It seems sometimes that applying the method in its tiniest details is more important than thinking about the possibility of scenarios and why they would develop. How well the analyst fills the forms of the method becomes the focus of the study and measures its corporate success. Priority is given to the structure over a theoretical analysis of its content. It comes very close to what Barkin calls fetishizing a method. And as he aptly remarks: 'To fetishize method is to draw one's focus away from the study of politics.' (Barkin 2010:95). The private security analyst, for their part, is conscious that politics is at the centre of their reflection about threat and risk.

The difficulty, for the analyst, lies in consciously identifying the relevant IR theories that will illuminate a series of facts and give them sense and not only use them implicitly. Simplifying, generalising, using concepts, and working on the basis of assumptions can be seen as a form of unreflective and implicit 'theorising', which might – perhaps – be improved by being more rigorous and more reflective.

2. Globalisation, MNC accountability and the regionalisation of security

Globalisation, as we know it today, is a complex production and distribution system that resulted from the end of the Cold War, an event that triggered the final wave of decolonisation of the 20th century[6]. A new international political landscape emerged in the 1990's, almost unchanged to this day.

For many observers and analysts, the end of the Cold War marked the final triumph of capitalism over state-centric economies. In this new world, profitable hydrocarbon pipeline routes became possible, new investment opportunities opened up, internal market deregulated and AIC (Advanced Industrial Countries) corporations could suddenly expand *ad infinitum*, find their second wind and return to profitability.

MNCs operate in all sectors of the economy but oil companies began plundering oil-rich colonies as early as the 1930's in the Middle East and Africa. After the first decolonisation

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[6] Namibia 1991, South Africa 1994, in Africa and the 15 Soviet republics in 1990 and 1991, in the Baltic states, eastern Europe, southern Caucasus and central Asia.

wave of the 1960-70's (1971 for the oil rich states of the Gulf), these potentially immensely rich countries organised themselves to become political players on the world scene. The unexpected role played by OPEC during and after the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1973 was a wake-up call for everyone, and particularly for former colonial powers. It marked a rearrangement of the balance of power between former masters (the AIC) and producers (former colonies and oil rich countries), and made manifest the relative decline of great western powers. Since then, the balance has again shifted to an equilibrium between AICs and producers. Modern oil & gas undertakings now operate as International Joint Ventures (IJVs), where MNCs and local companies share risks, investments and benefits.

In such places and in spite of governments' claims to the contrary, security of expatriates cannot be guaranteed and threats and risks to projects are numerous. As a security practitioner in the Middle East and a former director of security in a major gas project in Qatar and the UAE, I have accumulated a vast experience in this domain, which explains why examples from the secondary sector and the Middle East region will be numerous in this thesis.

Manufacturing abroad is also a huge and lucrative activity. Majors in Advanced Industrial Countries (AIC) [7] regularly transfer their manufacturing activity to countries, where salaries, taxes and running costs are hugely advantageous when compared to their country of registration. In this sector the decision to relocate is constrained by two criteria: geographical capabilities and an existing or potential distribution network. Here, the main asset is the existence of cheap and trainable labour and the capability for the final product to reach distribution hubs. Governments of emerging countries are likely to provide tax-free investments, possibility to export profits to the country of origin and other incentives, in order to secure the installation of a big factory on their soil (car manufacturers, sports brands, and many others). The benefits to the local populace are obvious: even when wages are awfully low, crucial means of survival are provided. Governments bet on the gratitude from the population concerned and MNCs do not have to dread the negative power of disruptive trade unions.

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[7] Defined by the United Nations as North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australasia.

The tertiary sector was the last to enter the de-territorialisation game (banking, insurance, and tourism) and is booming, although it is concentrated in AICs and only selected developing countries.

The focus of our study will be on the security challenges facing multinational corporations (MNC) operating at distance from the host state and in often unstable environments, and the way the private security analyst can apprehend and anticipate these challenges.

It is often advanced that MNCs are the heirs of the dozens of European charter companies that flourished from the 17th century onwards and favoured both commercial expansion and colonialism[8]. Critics affirm that they are simply colonialism in a new guise. This assertion needs to be moderated. The *British East India Company* or *la Compagnie Française des Indes Orientales* carried marine troops aboard their ships, guns in the belly of their ships and benefitted from a network of trading points which were in fact military forts, with soldiers, canons and impregnable walls. This is not the case anymore. Nowadays, MNCs often enter into International Joint Ventures (IJV) with states and governments to which they surrender control over many aspects of the IJV activities, either to enter deals they still find, somehow profitable, or to get 'a foot in the door' in a region or in an untapped market, or to prevent a competitor from entering a potentially lucrative market, for example. Yet, their overall economic power allows them to accept these second-rate conditions as part of their economic growth. As an example, oil giants *Total* and *Occidental Petroleum* accepted minority shares in a gas project in Qatar for these very reasons and continue to do so in several other countries in the world.

MNCs numbered 1,760 in 1990, 4,600 in 1995 and almost 900,000 in 2008![9]

There are MNCs in all countries and the vast majority of MNCs and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) flows originate within and among OECD countries.

Reasons for an IJV between these entities are numerous, but the most common are: (1) risk sharing, particularly in highly capital-intensive industries such as oil & gas; (2) geographical constraints: hydrocarbons, and raw material must be extracted where they

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[8] The last one, the Mozambique Company was dissolved in 1972.

[9] According to the UNCTAD report of 2009, there were in 2008 889,416 multinational companies (MNCs) around the world: 82,053 parent corporations and 807,363 affiliates.

are. Therefore, creating an IJV where country A brings extracting skills and experience to country B who possesses the raw materials, seems the logical (and profitable) way for both sides of the deal; (3) access to new markets, particularly when the host country is already a raw material hub (Qatar, Azerbaijan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Algeria, to name a few); and (4) links with existing distribution networks (LNG, cross-country pipelines, major industrial ports).

Because they represent an important share of the security consultancies' corporate clientele, my interest lies with those western MNCs that enter into an IJV to extract/ produce and distribute raw materials from a host country[10], and those who decentralised their production networks to countries offering cheap labour and a welcome absence of taxes through a IJV. Multi National Companies who adopt this organisational model, transfer the responsibility of protection of their assets to the host country, whilst keeping accountability of it in their own courts of law. This is a very risky game since most of the time these host countries are emerging countries struggling to impose their own legitimacy, and with very little means to ensure this extra security burden. The tension between security expectations and protection capabilities is of course exacerbated when social and religious issues are added to poverty and rampant corruption.

The capacity to obtain finance and geographical constraints were for a long time the only two major issues of this type of venture. The 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks and the wars that followed acted as a wake-up call for a lot of these IJVs of the secondary sector (industry, oil & gas, chemicals, etc.). The following example will illustrate my point:

In 2004, I took up a position of security director for a company in Qatar called Dolphin Energy, which is an IJV between Mubadala Investment Company (the investment company of the government of Abu Dhabi) who owns 51% of the shares, Occidental Petroleum (US) who owns 24.5% and Total (France) with the remaining 24.5%. This IJV extracts gas from the Qatar north field, the gas field shared with Iran, processes it at the plant in Ras Laffan (north eastern Qatar) and transports the refined methane over 300km through an underwater pipeline to the United Arab Emirates shores where it connected to

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[10] Such as western companies entering joint ventures with oil & gas producers, as an example.

a distribution pipeline network serving Dubai, Oman and several other regional customers. The gas itself belonged to Qatar who receives a substantial sum for each cubic metre of gas sold. It is beneficial for all partners, since building and running costs are shared by the three (foreign) shareholders, Qatar providing both the land in its industrial city in Ras Laffan and the right to drill and exploit two offshore platforms for a hefty part of the profits, and all benefitted from the exploitation of this north field gas[11]. During the project phase (from 1999 to 2005), not a single thought was given to security. But the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan worried investors and the necessity to devise some kind of protection to protect assets and people in the region came at an opportune moment and landed me the job.

This IJV is quite representative of the post-Cold War combinations between AICs and raw material rich countries.

The last twenty years have seen a shift of power between strategic raw material rich countries and AICs requesting countries. As Held remarks:

> Host countries have been able to impose better business deals for them while imposing some operational requirements on foreign firms, such as requiring them to use a certain proportion of locally produced inputs, employ a certain number of locally recruited employees or reach a certain exports targets. (Held 2005: 257)

A side effect of this new balance of power is that the host countries consider it their regalian prerogative to provide the security for projects developing on their soil. This 'new deal' naturally creates a lasting tension between the stakeholders, investors, owners and expatriate employees on the one side and the security apparatus of the host countries, often ill equipped, poorly resourced and served by unmotivated elements, on the other. This incredible challenge is a unique historical case of security transfer.

This handover is partly the result of historical changes in mentalities. It would not seem acceptable to protect one's workers in an emerging country with one's own troops. This is only possible in countries at war with themselves (Iraq, Afghanistan) and only up to a

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[11] This IJV is still going well today, confirming this evaluation.

point[12]. International industrial private projects usually do not belong with this category. They face threats that are varied in nature, multifarious but tangible, and the host country governments consider it their duty to endorse responsibility for facing these threats (that they would often face anyway, irrespective of the presence of an exogenous industrial project).

What makes this arrangement interesting is that the *responsibility to protect* is now displaced from the exploiting to the producing state. For a decade after the end of communism, enthusiasm and profits ran high. This perception of profit maximisation in a suddenly unlimited geographical world held strong until a rather small but dramatic incident occurred in Karachi (Pakistan) on 8th May 2002. On this day, a bomb attack was carried out against a bus carrying French workers of the Direction des Constructions Navales (DCN) on their way to work[13] to the military port of Karachi. It claimed the life of 11 workers, while wounding another 12.

The court case that ensued and the judgement rendered on 16th January 2004 by the court of Saint-Lô[14] (France) ordered the DCN to pay 705,000 euros of compensation to the families of the workers killed in the attack. The court said that the attack had been made possible because of *'an inexcusable mistake by the employer, namely to have minimised the risks faced by the employees'*. Interestingly, and a particularly salient remark from our research perspective, the lawyer for the company argued that *'the DCN had committed no mistake, since the security was being entirely provided by the Pakistani army'* ('Attentat de Karachi: la DCN condamnée': 2004).

This jurisprudence decision brutally modified the security landscape for MNCs. Entrusting the security of their assets and personnel deployed abroad to the host country had been granted casually, creating an irreversible security precedent that the judges in St-Lo did not accept.

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[12] In Iraq and Afghanistan, US and British troops protected their contractors regrouped in compounds and military bases. However, these contractors were employed by the respective governments usually to provide services to the occupation forces.

[13] These workers of the Direction des Constructions Navales were working on the construction of Agosta submarines sold by the French to the Pakistani navy,

[14] A town in northwestern France (Normandy) with a population of 18,000 inhabitants.

It was clear that, for the courts, parent companies were to assume total accountability for the protection of their assets deployed abroad. From there on, MNCs had to ensure that transfer of security was unacceptable and security arrangements should convince any judge that everything possible had been done to ensure the safety of the people deployed, from physical protection of workers in their daily life to a sound evacuation plan should the local situation deteriorate.

Due diligence normally precedes any international joint venture, but it does not generally extend to security. Profits envisioned coupled with boundless optimism usually take centre stage. Nobody gives serious thought to the security risks of the project until the first hard hats and safety shoes appear on the ground and threats suddenly begin to materialise. Furthermore, the idea that creating employment abroad will always be perceived positively is still widespread in AIC countries. We will see later that it is not always the case.

The 9/11 events compromised the security paradigm established in the 1990s but did not challenge the principle that it was the regalian prerogative of host countries to ensure the physical integrity of the MNC assets deployed in their country. Furthermore, in the liberal post-Cold War new world order, government agencies would not consider MNCs as their responsibility anymore. The conjunction of budget reduction and the increasingly complex nature of international relations between close to two hundred independent countries forced government agencies to focus on international affairs and leave MNCs to fend for themselves.

What the Karachi bombing had made crystal clear, though, at least for continental MNCs, was that parent companies involved in transnational projects would remain legally accountable for the security of their staff/employees and that, should any deadly incident occur, they would be judged on the adequacy of their security arrangements. A rush for security consultants to be deployed on-site began, and I was part of this first batch of ex-military personnel sent to protect engineers and operators abroad. It happens that my first assignment was for the exact same French DCN[15] that had entrusted me with the double

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[15] Direction des Constructions Navales based in Lorient (Brittany). The DCN changed its name in 2007 to become the DCNS.

task of protecting their personnel and providing security analysis on the Saudi political situation.

When I took the position in Jeddah in 2004, the management of DCN in Lorient (France) was obsessed with: (1) having an evacuation plan at the ready and (2) anticipating what would happen after the demise of King Fahd[16]. The first issue was to be dealt with by the security consultant, usually the ex-military type, supported by a logistical team in Paris, while the second one was material for the geopolitical analyst.

Consultants, recently released from the forces, were dispatched without preparation to deal with the day-to-day security concerns of an anxious workforce, while, simultaneously, a new breed of security analysts were actively sought to produce warning notes for the headquarters of parent companies.

To face these security challenges, and meet their legal obligations vis-à-vis their own judicial systems, MNCs started to: (1) evaluate the reasonableness of establishing a set-up in a region, IJV, or relocation of production from a security perspective and security due diligence inquiries; (2) monitor the security on site and understand the threats facing their setups – direct threats against them as a company, as well as transitive threats; (3) require the service of private security analysts to *monitor* this situation, *clarify* the nature of possible incidents and *anticipate* possible actions against the project, both direct and indirect; and (4) put in place a mechanism of evacuation, should the situation deteriorate.

3. Institutional analyst versus private analyst.

At this point it is useful to clarify the key differences between the institutional (i.e. governmental) and the private security analyst. For Trotignon:

> The institutional analyst aims to support the action of the government and is therefore submitted to an operational urgency, and their work must be immediately usable by political authorities, or civil or military echelon responsible for taking action. (Trotignon 2015: 274)

Contrary to the private security analyst, the government analyst can resort to means of a *regalian* nature, such as clandestinely obtained data: human intelligence, technical

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[16] King Fahd had suffered a debilitating stroke in 1995 and Prince Abdullah ran the country on his behalf. Fahd died in 2005 with no consequences on the political situation in the Kingdom.

sources (phone tapping, interception of internet flow, tracking, items of information coming from the field, public data and also co-operation from other services). As Hartwell[17] remarks:

> Nevertheless, as revealed by the Edward Snowden whistleblowing scandal, it is still the case that the intelligence agencies have access to a far greater range and depth of source material than is available to open source analysts – and this remains the principal difference between the public and private analytical communities. (Hartwell, email: 13 October 2015)

The institutional analyst has therefore access to a gigantic mass of information that needs to be indexed, classified and understood according to methods he has the entire liberty to choose. This phase of exploitation, can be done through dedicated software, but cannot replace the analysis whose purpose is to give sense to myriad of converging and often less converging items of information.

The role of institutional analysts is 'to support the government foreign policy, its diplomacy, its defence policy as well as the domestic security apparatus and to anticipate the disposal of autonomy of appreciation, decision and action'[18] . To this effect, they use methods (as well as sources) that are never revealed to the institutional customer. Of note is that only an infinitesimal portion of the intelligence material is dispatched to such clients, and the rest constitutes a formidable body of knowledge that remains available for more in depth analysis for the institutional customer.

Private security analysts as stakeholders in the corporate security world did not really exist before the 1990's; 'their role was held by think-tanks, institutions and government agencies, to some extent' (Hartwell, email: 12 October 2015).

Many private security analysts of today commenced their career in ministries and honed their skills (and learned their trade) in the field of international politics. As Trotignon remarks:

> Analytic skills, with a few exceptions, are not taught in the 'civilian' world, perhaps because we are more about a demarche, and a method rather than a real discipline and that administration must provide a great part of the training. (Trotignon 2015: 273)

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[17] Director and Managing Editor of Middle East Insider; He is now an independent political risk and international security consultant. Email to the author: 12 October 2015.

[18] Livre Blanc, Défense et sécurité nationale. Paris. Odile Jacob/ La Documentation Française, 2008, p. 131.

Caillaud, in a communication with the author, deplored that none of his analysts undertook any training in forecasting. Forecasting, he said. 'Is on everybody's lips, but the truth is that nobody really discusses methodology'. For him, this remark applies to both the public and the private sector. Dave Hartwell[19],who moved from being an MoD analyst to become a private independent analyst, makes this interesting remark regarding the difference between institutional and private analysts:

> There are now many similarities to working as an analyst in the public or private sectors, whereas perhaps 10-15 years ago, there were many more differences. That said, it is certainly the case that social media and open source intelligence has democratised the analytical process, taking it away from established think-tanks, institutions and even government agencies to some extent; however, the methodologies and processes that drive analysis and assessment in both the public and private sectors remains the same. (Hartwell, email: 13 October 2015)

Public and private analysts produce documents according to the same principles, inspired by the intelligence cycle process. But the task of the private security analyst is to understand the specific needs of their corporate customers. For an analyst trained in institutional bureaus, the fact that the private organisation, and not the state, is at the centre of the analyst and customer preoccupations must be a determinant element of the analysis.

The responsibility to protect has forced parent companies to create new security models for their expatriates deployed abroad.

Following two decades of progress through trial and error, a new race of corporate security managers, usually retired generals or senior officers, has emerged, for who this new career in corporate security appears as the logical continuation of their military career.

To summarise, governments have weapons to support their decisions: a diplomatic corps, armies, influence and international political networks. Corporate security decision makers have no such luxuries, and are accountable before the law of their country. Their concern is to secure their assets while achieving the highest level of production. Analyses of

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[19] Director and Managing Editor of Middle East Insider; He is now an independent political risk and international security consultant. Email to the author: 12 October 2015.

threats against their organisation condition the way they can maintain their business activities abroad and keep it profitable. Anticipation of undesired security events becomes the vital tool for decision-making, as important as the technical organisation of security on site and the personnel evacuation plan.

4. Corporate expectations in a globalised context

Expectations in the private sector differ from those in the administration. Trotignon a senior analyst and a former analyst at the DGSE[20], establishes three basic differences between readers from the private and the public sector. For him, (1) the reader from the private sector is not always a professional of the subject contrary to institutional readers. Therefore, (2) the private customer expects advice and recommendations, while government entities never do; (3) ministries are hugely documented through a number of different channels, which is not the case for private entities.

Public and private entities do share some common characteristics: (1) major questioning after an event and willingness to project oneself beyond tomorrow; (2) both the government and the industry are overwhelmed with information. It is not information they seek, but rather a single strong viewpoint; (3) both need to apply immediate operational solutions.

Their needs, though, are essentially different. As Caillaud remarked:

> Today, we have to give straightforward answers to practical questions: Do we need an escort? Do we need armoured cars? Which hotels can we use? What are the risks in this region if we build a dam, or we launch an industrial project? (Caillaud, interview: 25 June 2013)

These customers are, in Trotignon's words: 'demanding, always in a hurry, and ask pertinent questions when the documents are unclear' (email to the author, 15 May 2015). What do corporate security decision makers want that could differ from their institutional counterparts? They want to make sure that they can do business profitably without having their people and assets trapped abroad in costly and precarious situations. What they expect from the security analyst is: (1) to be briefed about the risks of entering business in a specific situation: *Can we do business there? can we join this joint venture*? (2) to

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[20] Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure.

understand what are the threats, risk and liabilities the company may incur should they decide to go ahead; (3) to identify threats-as-agents: *who would want to harm our business, and how could someone jeopardise the project?* (threat-as-actions) (4) To be told when to extract their tangible assets, people, equipment and essential skills from a place: *When should we think about breaking away from that deal?* In other words, how to determine a threshold at which to end participation in the IJV; and (5) anticipate these events and receive a constant aid-to-decision in the way of warning bulletins or crisis notes.

One of the main issues faced by private security is that customers have usually no training regarding geo-security:

> Clients are engineers, commercials, at best former officers, but more often operational people rather than analysts. Their reading grid of a situation is often miles away from what the analyst would consider as reasonable. (Caillaud, interview: 25 June 2013)

A lot of literature deals with the institutional decision maker. Foreign Policy Decision Making (FPDM) defined as part of foreign policy analysis (FPA) has dealt with the decision-making process in international politics while none has really focused on the specifics of the corporate decision maker. For Balencie, a senior analyst with Risk&Co and a successful author (1999; 2005 and 2008), the concerns of the private sector are essentially practical.[21]:

> In the private sector, the client has already taken his decision when he contacts us. What they really want is to ensure the security of their expatriate people. The question is usually: Can we stay? Should we leave the country? (Balencie, interview: 25 June 2013)

The responsibilities of the corporate decision maker are twofold: one is to provide what Boyle calls 'the 'nuts and bolts' of security provision and the management of the representational elements of these efforts' (Boyle and Haggerty 2009: 262). The other one is to agree on a threshold that will trigger the evacuation process. This second topic is an extremely important issue that I intend to clarify in this thesis, since, to my

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[21] In a semi-structured interview with the author on 25 June 2013, in Neuilly. Five analysts attended this semi-structured interview.

professional knowledge there are no rules to establish this threshold and no method to approach the problem.

Trotignon insists on the specific needs of the customers as well as their shortcomings:

> We must write for clients who are in a hurry and who are demanding. But we must also try to understand what they know, what they think they know and what they do not understand. Our audience is a readership of technical people, excellent in their job, but often without international culture. The analyst should ask three questions: what are the customer's needs? What are their assimilation capacities? What is their culture? (Email, 15 May 2015)

The private customer has high expectations, while the analyst works on his own, sometimes with the support of a pool of private analysts, but without access to institutional information. The challenge for analysts is therefore to find their own sources; do as much with much less and, if possible, faster. Analysts must keep in mind that the customer is often an avid reader of the press and expects a different level of information from them.

The corporate decision maker expects explanatory notes to justify assertive statements. Trotignon highlights that, to satisfy the customer, 'the analyst must appeal to all available resources, mix approaches, and innovate' (Email, 15 May 2015).

5. The private analyst, regionalisation and security

The new globalisation may have united countries into security regional complexes free from cumbersome hegemons, but it has also weakened and fragmented them into historically bred sub-units. With regained freedom, pre-colonial enmities resurfaced. In Eastern Europe, a new 'balkanisation' occurred, and more recently in North Africa, the destruction of the Gadhafi regime highlighted the fragile nature of countries such as Libya, and its deep social and ethnic divisions. In north Africa, most countries have shown that their social tissue consisted in layers and layers of discordant and sometimes irreconcilable cultures.

Racial differences, historical inheritance, and tribal violence tend to resurface when given a chance, and shake the nation-state to its foundation.

Private security analysts, with their academic[22] knowledge of specific areas and their capability to conceptualise security, could highlight the fact that situations in host countries are often more complicated than anticipated in MNCs executive suites and need constant monitoring. As Dannreuther highlighted:

> A comprehensive conceptualization of international security demands broader perspectives, rooted in an understanding of global historical process, of the multiple ways in which relations between states have developed and the legacies they have left, and of the complex mix of local, regional and international sources of conflict and insecurity. (Dannreuther 2007: 209-10)

Emerging countries are not always solid and mature constituencies, and the advantages sought by their government when entering a deal with an AIC seldom consider benefit for their citizens as a priority. Such governments, who often brutally control the security apparatus (police, army, gendarmerie), can seek economic bounty for a few, while feeling strong enough for keeping in check those who would object to their self-enrichment objectives.

Although it is true that states remain the legitimate representative of the nations, nations are social constructs that take root in a long and often complex history. Nations can be a result of liberation wars, colonial legacy, even great power cravings, and the same can be said of regions (in the sense of province). Buzan is correct to highlight that:

> There is also an important set of security dynamics at regional level, and this often tends to get lost or discounted. At that middle level, one finds only the hazy notions of regional balances of power and subsystems, or crude media references that use region to describe whatever location currently contains a newsworthy level of political turbulence. (Buzan 2009: 158)

Buzan's security complexes defined as 'a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another'. (Buzan 2009: 160) establishes new levels of analysis, the analysis of the regional system itself and the relation of this system upstream with the international system, and downstream down to the subnational level. Thus, when tasked

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[22] And often a personal historical and familial knowledge.

with a regional IR security issue, the analyst should systematically consider three layers of analysis: the regional, the national and the provincial (or subnational).

Regional and national levels are part of the traditional scope of analysis of academically trained analysts. They are well known and practiced. The provincial level may be that 'extra mile' level that will add value to the security analysis, because it is mostly at that level that industrial projects will face threats and security challenges. Provincial identities can carry in their DNA long lasting resentment and exploiting such resentment from a constructivist perspective must always be present in the analyst's mind. Dannreuther highlights the importance of ideas even at domestic level:

> Beliefs, perceptions and intentions, often emanating from domestic social forces, play a central role in explaining the dynamics of power politics and conflict, which pushes defensive Realism, or as it is sometimes termed neo-classical Realism, more towards the constructivist end of the methodological spectrum. (Dannreuther 2007: 39)

This phenomenon is even observed in western Europe, where Irish, Basques, Corsicans and Catalans, to name a few, have an irredentist attitude based more on emotional beliefs and myths rather than rational analysis, towards what they consider as illegitimate governments. Similar separatist groups could be showcased in Eastern Europe and further east as well.

Regionalism and provincialism, though, are not entirely new approaches, but the end of the Cold War gave them a particular impetus through newly articulated theoretical perspectives. Snyder remarked that:

> Following the end of the cold war a new school of regional analysis adopted a constructivist/critical security approach and began to raise questions about how notions of regional identities were being advanced. The 'new regionalism' school differs from previous study of regions in that the earlier study focused on the 'functionalist' nature of integration that emerged in Western Europe in the 1950's and 1960's. Functionalism explains how regional structures operate (…) but is unable to explain how regional orders are created in the first place. Nor do they address the important role that the development of regional identities plays in regionalism. (Snyder 2008: 229-30)

Thus, understanding threat origins, construction and scope of application is where private security analysts will add value. They are able to apprehend the different geographical and social levels of tension which must be taken into account to satisfy the customer's security interrogations and concerns. Hettne identified three main types of conflict:

> Traditional balance of power contests between great and regional powers; 'grass fire' conflicts which emerge from the more primitive security complexes, and intra-state conflicts. (Hettne 1998: 54)

The MNC or the IJV may face at different times one or all of these threats and a professional analyst is needed to interpret the warning signals at all levels.

Snyder (2008: 227) posits that the region is the most appropriate level of analysis to examine international order issues. I believe that it is a level, like the national, that can be understood by many. The provincial (or intra-state level) is more difficult to decipher and requires the help of a specialist. It is the most obscure level, the one where hidden or unknown forces possess potential for disruption and destruction.

In this thesis, I will refer to Buzan security complexes, these 'empirical phenomenon with historical and geopolitics roots' (Buzan 2009: 160); but I will also differ from his regional approach because I want to emphasise the crucial importance of provincialism (subnational level) in the analysis process. Provinces can become reluctantly attached to regions they reject and countries they perceive as oppressors while harbouring cultural, social and historical claims to something very close to nationhood. Understanding the relationship between regional, national and provincial (sub-national) entities and evaluating the potential threats and challenges emanating from each of them may make the difference between a complex but viable project and a doomed one. The private security analyst is a key element in this understanding.

6. The research aims

This research aims to improve the skills of security practitioners deployed in volatile and dangerous areas to protect an expatriate (and often mixed expatriate and local) workforce. It is intended for a specific audience. It is aimed at providing a tool for reflection, as well as a method of analysis for those practitioners who exercise their art in the confines of security consultancy and security risk analysis. Often, these people are second-career practitioners who enter the corporate security world after several decades in the police force or the military and are thrown into their missions with no particular training on the basis of an assumed competence. A saying that is often repeated in French cadet schools is: "a French officer can do everything", which is often the case, since peacetime missions encompass all sorts of unmilitary activities. Yet, the skills of a former officer and that of

a security consultant are different. When I was thrown into the position of a security consultant – and analyst – in Saudi Arabia in 2004, I was not prepared for that mission, which encompasses the responsibilities of an officer, a NCOs and sometimes of a foot soldier and the skills of a security technician and a political analyst. Furthermore, deployed security consultants can rarely delegate and are often the ones who write their job description for lack of guidance at the higher echelon of most security consultancies. These people may not be conventional analysts produced by academia and who honed their skills in governmental entities, but more often than not they may be called upon to fulfil a role where security risk analysis plays an important part. The interviews I led with seasoned security analysts confirmed that the job of security analyst and of security consultant are on a converging path and that security consultants will be more and more subject to analytical requests from their hierarchy or from HQ analysts who need vital information that can only be obtained in the field. I do not suggest here that an academic degree is a prerequisite to become a competent consultant *cum* analyst, although it obviously helps, but it has become almost a necessary ability for these practitioners deployed in far-off places where they must, at the same time, establish the diagnostic – e.g. provide a correct risk evaluation of the situation - and administer the appropriate remedy, e.g. establish the relevant and appropriate security plan.

7. Presentation of the dissertation chapters

This first chapter is organised around two central ideas: an explanation of what motivated the choice of this topic as well as the rationale to justify the need for such research. I place this research about security analysis within a corporate framework taking into account the evolution of threats faced by MNCs deploying workforces abroad, compare the tasks and means at the disposal of the institutional and the private security analyst and define the expectations of corporate businesses in terms of security and analyses. I then introduce the idea of the regionalisation of security and how this recalibration impacts the tasks of the private security analysts.

In chapter 2, I present the literature review and the research design, focusing on literature dealing with the capability of Realism to act as a relevant tool for security analysis and offer a summary of current academic studies about applied forecasting. I then explain

how the qualitative research for this study had been conducted resting essentially on reflexivity, a study of existing literature, semi-structured interviews with seasoned private security analysts and two case studies.

In the third chapter, I introduce and discuss the idea of political and security forecasting, define the link between analysis and forecast, provide an overview of an existing situation, and describe the existing resources at my disposal. This chapter discusses (1) forecasting principles and concepts; (2) contingent versus unconditional forecasting; (3) the concept of the target centric approach; and (4) concludes with an evaluation of existing forecasting techniques.

In chapter four, I analyse the respective place of power and security in the security analysis. I examine the specific demands of corporate security and discuss the relationship between theory and context. I then examine the limits of Realism as an explanatory tool for the security analyst and introduce the idea of complementing Classical Realism with a constructivist approach. Finally, I review the capability of cultural analysis to reinforce this and introduce a theory I call Reflexive Cultural Realism (RCR) as a possible solution to the research problem.

In chapter five, I explore Reflexive Cultural Realism as a relevant approach to security analysis and suggest the possibility of using the theory as part of a methodology. For that purpose, I select, define and articulate the components of the theory and recommend the use of scenarios as the preferred outcome of a security analysis. I demonstrate how the introduction of Reflexive Cultural Realism in scenarios will improve the analytical skills of the analysts. The issue of bias and bias control closes this chapter.

Chapter 6 outlines and analyses the seven stages of the method and demonstrates the added value of the Reflexive Cultural Realism approach through each of these stages. I explain how this methodical process, driven by a robust theoretical perspective, will improve the skills of the analyst and produce effective reports for the corporate decision maker.

In chapter 7, I assess the validity of the method using a case study located in Saudi Arabia in 2004. I study the issue of the decision to evacuate the workforce on the basis of security incidents, analysed on the basis of the RCR theory.

In chapter 8, I apply the method to a second case study in the same geographical region, where the risks incurred by a cross-national gas project between Qatar and the UAE are measured in a regional context. These two case studies highlight the added value of the RCR theoretical perspective and demonstrate the capability to answer corporate customers' questions with confidence.

In the concluding chapter, I summarise the findings of the study and place it in the wider realm of current security studies and suggest areas of interest for further research.

Chapter 2

Research Design

The central purpose of this research design is to explore two major avenues (theories of International Relations & forecasting techniques) to determine how forecasting techniques, used through a theoretically informed method, can improve the work of security analysis and how the association between theory and practice could be articulated. Because my research topic was exploratory, and would be moving on uncertain grounds in terms of underpinning theories, assumptions and variables, I thought a mixed methods design would provide the appropriate tool of analysis, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative method to provide the best understanding of the problem.

1. Strategies of inquiry

The Pragmatist tradition I locate myself in as a researcher assumes that individual researchers enjoy freedom of choice with regard to the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. Within this framework, I intended to use both qualitative and quantitative techniques, with the quantitative techniques aimed at reinforcing the findings obtained through qualitative proceedings. Because my research topic is exploratory, and would be moving on uncertain grounds in terms of underpinning theories, assumptions and variables, I thought that a mixed methods design would provide the right tool of analysis, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide the best understanding of the research problems. As Creswell has emphasised: 'Pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis' (Creswell 2009: 11).

1) Qualitative strategies.

The first part of the research was a qualitative exploration of the relationship between political/security analysis and forecasting techniques, focusing on measurable issues such as crisis and conflict prediction, in order to understand their operating mechanisms and underlying assumptions. This was achieved by analysing primary source documents such as interviews and electronic correspondence, as well as secondary source documents such as conference reports, articles and books.

The other part of the qualitative study was done through a study of relevant literature, to analyse the principal schools of Realism, in order to measure their major tenets and assumptions, and validate their generic relevance for political and security forecasting. I planned to uncover from famous predictions the underlying assumptions and biases shown by their authors. I also intended to check whether realist assumptions encompassed the whole spectrum of vector decisions not only in international, but also a regional and domestic security situation. A comparison between the theoretical and the technical approaches was then undertaken. The compatibility between techniques and theories, values, paradigms, variables of both approaches was assessed in order to discover whether a reconciliation could improve the skills of analysts. If underlying values, beliefs and assumptions are consistent and compatible, such a possibility may exist.

i) Feasibility:

The research I undertook for this study was qualitative, and the validity of assumptions were based on the validity of a series of interviews, with British and French analysts because of the access I could get to them. Time was never a constraint in the thesis, but choice of the analysts was dictated by my location at the time of the research. I contacted several security consultancies and three responded positively to my request, probably because in both cases, I had had previous professional relationship with the person authorising the interviews. I managed to secure an individual semi-structured interview in Dubai (UAE), another one in London (UK) and two group interviews, and a face-to-face conversation in Neuilly (France).

As a researcher on the topic, I can claim long experience as a security practitioner, and the fact that I have been working with analysts since 2003. I am a seasoned security practitioner, with several prestigious professional certifications and a long experience of security in the GCC countries where I have been operating as a security practitioner for thirteen years, (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain). A specialist of the corporate / industrial risk assessment, the threat analysis is very much about political / security analysis, I have long experience in measuring threats and analysing risk in volatile and unstable political environments.

The access to data in order to prepare the literature review was not an issue and I had access to all articles and books I selected to enhance my research.

ii) Social importance: the importance of developing the field of security sciences and international security

Originally the purpose of the research was to provide a method for private security analysts relying on solid theories of international relations to help them provide theory-informed analyses for their corporate clients, in line with the latter security expectations and business demands. I had an idea that this method would also benefit the security consultants deployed on site to give more depth to their real-life observations My experience as a security practitioner, was that analysts occupied one side of the stage, the high-level ground whose purpose is to inform decision makers at headquarters, while security consultants deployed in distant and unsecure places, occupied a lower stage, their task being to physically protect the workforce and assets deployed by the customer on site. Although the second is inextricably linked to the first one, it appeared that the connection between them is usually a rather tenuous link.

I think it is possible to improve the skills of the former, by promoting a security analysis that integrates the best of existing international relations theories with classical methods of analysis. My idea was to improve the analytical skills of the private security analyst and reduce the gap between security analysts and security consultants.

iii) Scientific relevance: no similar research has been done.

To my knowledge there is no existing research on the issue of political and security analysis seen from the private sector's perspective. The approach pursued in this thesis is quite unique, because it is situated at the crossroads between IR theories and business practices. This area of reflection remains under-developed and a lot a research remains conceivable. I consider this research, about theoretically informed analysis, as part of the private security analysis, as a starting point for several avenues of exploration on the topic.

b) Quantitative strategies

Initially, I intended to use electronic surveys to provide a quantitative description of attitudes of populations by studying a sample of both populations, security practitioners on the one hand, professional forecasters on the other, I intended to understand. The objectives of the survey were to answer the following questions:

1. Do professional forecasters think they act outside or political theories?
2. Perception of their own bias and reflexivity.
3. Constraints surrounding the quest for a IR forecasting model.
4. Force and variables acting on the model. Many variables of few?
5. Real weight of bias and assumptions (western approach).
6. Establish the limits of the model (trends, short term to long terms forecast).
7. The impact of predictive techniques on accuracy.
8. Rank Predictive technique for accuracy.

The survey (27 questions) was advertised in the IIF / Oracle newsletter in October 2011.

A reminder was posted in February 2012. The survey was later also posted on the LinkedIn IIF website (655 members) and the Foresight website (242 members) in February 2012.

I received a letter of interest from a lecturer in Poland and 6 of his student took the survey. The total number of results for the survey was 17 of which 6 were students. In agreement with my supervisors, I decided not to use these data for the research because they were deemed insufficiently representative of the segment of population targeted.

The surveys are still available at:

For the International Institute of Forecasters:
https://www.surveymonkey.net/summary/ThG2xPAvdc_2B6zGdyL8gPar_2FSmQRY9
Ysap7xBU5ktcFYfWfyGbG3SMhuznZgz89Cy, created on 25 October 2011.

For ForPrin:
https://www.surveymonkey.net/summary/bH7cKyaHbpeO0UTWficRwuJAn_2FH4XT
DTT7rts_2BM9WyB1u13eFM6b5cpNuGKOuPUc, created on 6 November 2011.

A second updated version of the survey modified on 22 February 2012 and designed for
the IIF website is still accessible at:
https://www.surveymonkey.net/summary/cxMJLd9T9V1H7PSozfRTA_2FcZ1oAUJ3A
h9y6A6c_2FoIkejdYDo1mRRBx2PturHMZvh

- Reflexivity

During this whole process, I used reflexivity as a methodological approach, since 'the
researcher cannot be entirely objective and detached from the research' (Eisner 1993).
Although I tried to show objectivity and impartiality, this research cannot free itself from
personal biases and cultural determinisms. Questions such as: (1) why did I choose the
topic I am researching; (2) How did I gather my data and why did I select this particular
method? (3) What assumptions am I making about the relationship between forecasting
techniques and Realism theories? And (4) what theoretical perspective am I taking and
how do I see my role in the research? All these questions are crucial to an understanding
of my approach and personal commitment to the research. The choice of methods, the
research process as well as the production of knowledge aimed to serve a project, are all
direct consequences of personal choices made in a context and for a purpose.
Reflexivity is about reflecting back on yourself as a researcher. It will play a major role
in the literary research of the study and help establish acceptable boundaries for the
research. Using reflexivity is implicitly admitting that the perspectives, approaches and
supporting material have been chosen to achieve a goal, reach an objective, and that other

material of value has been left aside, when not suiting the purpose. Reflexivity is a choice I made and it will be flagged when used in the research process.

- Secondary analysis

I have used secondary analysis, that is using existing qualitative data and re-analysing it in a different context, whenever previous findings were of interest for a demonstration I was engaged in. Although I understand that ethical issues might be raised regarding the use of survey conclusions obtained in dissimilar contexts, I fear that my study would lose quality by ignoring the significant amount of survey and questionnaire results put together by professional forecasting bodies, on such important issues such as the validity of methods, expectations and observed shortcomings of specific forecasting techniques. This existing database was used as a secondary source in order to help the conceptualisation of research questions.

 According to Corti, secondary users will be more interested in using data for their own specific research rather than replicating the original analysis, (Corti et al. 1995). To be on the safe side of ethics, the context and conditions of the surveys used in this study were carefully assessed, and when in doubt, ethics prevailed. Like Fielding (2000), I am of the opinion that secondary analysis of qualitative data may contribute positively to a study, provided the intention is with using the data to explore new ideas (Corti et al: 1995). Other types of documentary sources, such as professional journals and official statistics, were complementary tools used to reinforce and complement my conceptual progress.

- Reflexive Case studies

Although I used case studies in my study (illustrative examples would be more correct), they were not the starting point of the process. Reflexive Case studies served to illustrate my progress and underline and demonstrate specific points.

- *Interviews*

In 2011, Jane's Publications and the Control Risks Group answered positively to my request for interviews with one of their international security analysts. In 2013, the Risk

& Co Chairman and CEO, agreed to organise two working sessions with their entire pool of analysts in Neuilly-sur-Seine (France). Face-to-face conversations were also transcribed as part of the interviews and this data constituted the essential part of the primary sources of my research design. Emails and conversations followed with the analysts who showed more interest in my research and these emails were also added to the data collection.

o *Number of interviews and time frame*

A strict interview protocol was used to make sure those instructions to interviewees as a standard procedure would be used from one interview to another. The questions were open-ended questions and allowed the participants to answer and then to expand on what they had said during the interviews. The same protocol was used for the five interview sessions. The time and date of their sessions were:

- David Hartwell – Jane's Publications – London – 19th May 2011.
- Marie Bos – CRG – Dubai – 1st June 2011.
- Georgiy Voloshin – Neuilly – 24th June 2013.
- Yves Trotignon - Neuilly – 24th June 2013
- Anneliese Corlobe – Neuilly – 24th June 2013
- Priscilla Sadatchy – Neuilly - 24th June 2013
- Paul Chaignon – Neuilly – 24th June 2013
- Pauline Blit – Neuilly – 25th June 2013.
- Marc Brulport – Neuilly – 25th June 2013
- Marion Trovo-Harlay – Neuilly – 25th June 2013
- Meryem Boukarai – Neuilly – 25th June 2013
- Jean-Marc Balencie – Neuilly – 25th June 2013
- F-E Caillaud – Neuilly – Face to face interview 25th June 2013

Ali Siali, Middle East Business Development Manager at IHS Jane's, authorised an interview with David Hartwell, their editor for the Islamic Affairs magazine and a writer for Jane's Terrorism Monitor which took place in London, while Pannie Peters, then

Regional Director at Control Risks Middle East organised the interviewed with Ms Marie Bos in their Dubai office.

In 2012, when I transferred to a larger company, namely, Risk&Co, I requested the President of the company and the General Director of Strategic Analyses and Training, to let me organise a series of semi-structured interviews with their pool of analysts to help me understand what was their vision of security analysis and political forecasting. Two sessions were organised in Neuilly-sur-Seine (France), on the 24th and on the 25th of June 2013. Five analysts attended each session. The choice of attending a session was dictated by operational considerations. On the 25th, I had a face-to-face interview with F-E Caillaud, the General Director for Strategic Analyses and Training at Risk&Co, to discuss the findings of the interviews and the topic of security forecasting in more generic terms. The four interviews were semi-structured, and the interviewees were given the questions two weeks before the session to have time to think about the questions. The discussion with F-E Caillaud was informal but reflected on the issues discussed during the interviews.

All interviews were recorded and a transcript was prepared.

o *Ethics documents*

The interviews were planned and organised as per the University of Leicester ethical standards and regulations. Each person interviewed received two documents: (1) a Participation Information form (Appendix 2) which was emailed to each participant two weeks before the meeting; (2) an Informed Consent form (Appendix 3) which was read and signed by all participants on the day of the interview.

The first form, the Participation Information Form, appears in full in Appendix 4 of this study. Its purpose was to introduce the framework of the research. After introducing myself to the audience, I explained the purpose of the study and why they had been invited to participate. I sought to explain my endeavour to discover more about the way analysts:

- Perceive the nature of their work and assess its limits,
- Weigh the relative power of structure versus agency,

- Create their analyses using which variables,
- Assess the relevance of their analyses internally and what they think about the practicality of forecasting international affairs.

I then informed them that Franck-Emmanuel Caillaud had advanced their name but that they remained perfectly free to participate or not. Should they decide to take part, I informed them that they would have to sign the consent form. They were also informed that they remained free to withdraw at any time and without justification.

I then described the interview I envisioned: duration, type of interview (semi-structured) with questions already pre-selected, and an average time dedicated per question (7 to 8 minutes per question). I then explained the benefits of taking part in this interview and ensured that confidentiality would be respected. Everything mentioned during the interview would be kept strictly confidential and privacy and anonymity would be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. I mentioned in the form that the data generated in the course of this interview would be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project as per the University of Leicester regulation. Last, I mentioned that the data collected during the interview would then be used in my PhD dissertation and guaranteed that should the dissertation evolve into a published book, I would require again their authorisation to use part of the interview, and they would be fully entitled to reject my demand.

In the Informed Consent form, interviewees confirmed that they had understood the contents of the form, that they acknowledged the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time, and that they agreed to take part in the study. Each participant could tick one or all of three boxes where they agreed (1) to the interview being audio recorded; (2) to the interview being video recorded – which was not the case - and (3) that they agreed to the use of anonymised quotations in publications. Each participant dated and signed this form.

   o *The participants*

After several failed attempts at obtaining an interview with security consultancies, I became aware that security professionals of the private sector were very reluctant to showcase to an external researcher the methods and techniques used in their consultancies. The fact that I was myself part of the security world in the region probably worked against me. The possibility of using research material to reinforce the skills of my own company was probably the reason behind the refusals. Conversely, the professionals who knew me beforehand found the initiative interesting and provided full support. This is the reason why I interviewed consultants from the Control Risk Group, Jane's Publications and Risk&Co. The choice of interviewees was specific and almost dictated by my personal relationships in the professional milieu I belong to. It was a convenient sample and in the case of the formed group of analysts, I used naturally formed groups, a 'procedure of quasi experiment.' (Creswell 2009: 155).

The gender mix was two male and three female analysts in session 1 and two male and three female analysts in session 2. These samples reflect the gender repartition in the consultancy. The age spread was from the mid-twenties to the mid-thirties for the junior analysts and in their forties for the senior analysts; which also reflects my experience of the age of most private security analysts. These analysts covered a massive geographical area and answers to my questions were generic and not linked to a specific geographical or cultural area.

The name and area of responsibility of the analysts interviewed is located in appendix 1 at the end of the thesis.

o *Type of interview*

The first two interviews were of the face-to-face, one-on-one interview.

The next two sessions were focus-group interviews where I interviewed participants in a group. The last session was a one-on-one discussion with the General director of Strategic Analyses and Training at Risk&Co.

After the interviews, I managed to keep communicating by emails with the analysts who had found some interest in my research. This electronic correspondence was very useful both during the transcription phase and later on during the analysis of the interviews. Clarification was sometimes needed to redress assumptions and always provided by these

analysts. Participants were interviewed in their respective offices, in London, Dubai and Paris and were therefore familiar with their surroundings. Each interview lasted approximately sixty minutes.

Although the interview was semi-structured, in that the researcher wanted to collect answers to specific questions, the questions themselves were mainly open-ended questions, traditionally used for explorative purposes, allowing the interviewees 'to be free to answer in their own words.' (Ladikos 2009: 175).

o *Listening skills/ logistic arrangements*

The interviews were semi-structured (the interviewees received a questionnaire two weeks before the meeting and had therefore time to prepare for it). Interviews were recorded (with the recording function of an iPad) in their entirety and then transcribed and archived for further use.

iv) Documented data: books, conferences, articles etc.

During the data collection phase of the thesis, I endeavoured to read most of the existing literature on political analysis, international relations theories, intelligence and warning literature, forecasting methods and techniques, either through the university library online services, the internet and through the purchase of books cited in articles, that I thought would be central to the research. Most articles were academic in nature, but I used some interesting journalism pieces when their topic was relevant to the study.

v) Analysis of data

• Qualifications and experience with this approach

It is expected from qualitative researchers to disclose their personal background, experiences and agendas with readers of their research so that the readers can be conscious of any potential bias in the work.

In the course of my assignments in the region, I was often tasked to write political analysis of the local and regional political situation in the countries where I was posted. These analyses were always predictive in nature. In Jeddah, I was writing a monthly security newsletter for the CEO of a major French company on the situation in the kingdom of

Saudi Arabia. All my analysis work revolved around the different plausible scenarios following the expected demise of King Fahd, and a monitoring of the security situation by Saudi authorities. Later, as a corporate security advisor of a major oil & gas joint venture in Qatar, monitoring the regional situation was part of my duties for the executive team.

Regarding my credentials as an analyst, I am a member of the International Institute of Forecasters (IIF) and a member of the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS), from which I hold the CPP, PCI and PSP certifications[1].

My passion for the forecasting of international affairs was exacerbated by the shortcomings I became conscious of during my time as a part-time security analyst in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The drive behind this PhD project was therefore a mix of professional interest and academic inclination. The Master degree in International Policy & Diplomacy provided the academic credentials I was seeking, and gave me a solid academic background in terms of international politics. It covered the whole spectrum of international relations, opening my mind to the IR theories for which I immediately conceived a great interest. The topic of my Masters dissertation[2] explored the concept of IR analysis, as seen from a security perspective, based on solid realist assumptions.

I am convinced that through rigorous academic methods, and based on my wide interest in international affairs, I can see beyond my own ideological and professional assumptions. My interest in understanding the relationship between forecasting as a technique and a constructivist cultural Realism as an explanatory worldview of international politics goes beyond the idea of finding a predictive recipe to be used in my everyday work. It relates to a need to refine political analysis in order to make it a relevant and effective tool for decision.

    vi) Findings

- Validity and reliability of the research

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[1] Certified Protection Professional (CPP), Professional Certified Investigator (PCI) and Physical Security Professional (PSP).

[2] Security Challenges and Diplomatic Strategies: To what Extent do Balance of Power Theories Explain the Political Behaviour of Persian Gulf States.

As far as interviews are concerned, I checked the accuracy of the findings to make sure that there were no mistakes in the transcriptions. I forwarded a written transcription of the interviews to the participants and they sent me a correction of my wording.

The questions asked were identical. This was the reason behind choosing the semi-structured type of interview,

The validity of the research consists in determining 'whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants or the readers of an account' (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As previously said, I used member checking to ensure the accuracy of my transcriptions and some of participants' comments were often followed by a series of email follow-up conversations (numerous emails with Hartwell and Trotignon, clarification emails with Balencie and Caillaud). I also used detailed description to convey the findings. By providing detailed descriptions of the settings and emphasising circumstances in my case studies about Qatar and Saudi Arabia, I reinforced the validity of the findings. Reflexivity was a common thread throughout the thesis and my own biases were accepted as part of the reflective approach.

Finally, I used peer debriefing by asking professional analysts to ensure that my assumptions and propositions were making sense to a professional audience. This was done through electronic communications and physical debrief when possible, (the visit of Trotignon and Marie, two analysts at Risk&Co in Bahrain on 13th of May 2016 was such an occasion).

- Reflexive Case studies

The purpose of the two case studies was to measure, the validity of the Reflexive Cultural Realism method. It was important for me to fully understand the complexity of the surroundings I was going to use as a background to the study to measure whether the RCR approach would have increased the capabilities of analysts and consultants deployed on site. It was also important that to judge the explanatory power of the approach, I was in a privileged position of an observer, able to understand the concerns of the corporate customer and how these concerns fitted at the domestic level of security threat and risk.

Last, to illustrate the validity of the cultural aspect of the RCR theory, it was crucial that the observer be familiarised with the local culture where corporate assets were deployed. That is why I chose two situations in culturally similar environments that I had observed first-hand, and where I could interpret power relationships between domestic, regional and international forces in real time. In these two case studies, I acted as the highest security authority on site, and was entrusted with the security of an expatriate workforce. Being able to recollect events other than those appearing in the mainstream media, thanks to my position as security authority, I felt I could judge better, with hindsight, whether a reflective cultural Realism perspective would have improved my performance as a security practitioner.

i) The research experience

As a researcher, the failure of the survey was probably the most difficult blow to a research that started on a very enthusiastic and optimistic note. Perhaps naively, I was convinced that professional forecasters would find my topic fascinating and would like to be part of an original and relevant research. I was encouraged in that positive view by the enthusiastic support I received from the International Institute of Forecasters in the person of their Director Pam Stroud and the interest shown by the President of the IIF and the editorial staff at the Oracle.

The purpose of the survey research was to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about some characteristic attitude or behaviour of this population (Creswell 2009: 146). The population surveyed was that of forecasters registered with the International Institute of Forecasting, who belong to two special interest groups (SIG): Political forecasting, and Crisis and Terror, as they are the SIG the most relevant to a research focused on Security forecasting.

By targeting a relatively large number of professional forecasters, (655 for the IIF LinkedIn website and 242 for the Foresight LinkedIn website) and with the support of the Institute, I thought I would reach sufficient and significant numbers of professionals and be able to study a sample more representative than by trying to obtain individual interviews. I anticipated the difficulty to be granted interviews

with analysts in the security industry, since analysts are usually bound by non-disclosure agreement net preventing them from discussing the methodology used in forecast. I expected forecasters to respond well to my request if supported by the Institute's management.

The data collection was to be done through self-administered questionnaires and collected by myself through the management tools provided by Survey Monkey. I was able to secure an article in the Oracle, the liaison bulletin of the Institute where I introduced my survey. I intended to use clustering in my sampling design for the population. My minimum target size population was 40 individuals.

The results proved extremely disappointing and I decided to shift the research strategy and abandon qualitative strategies to focus on qualitative research. I had secured in 2011 two interviews with analyst from Jane's publications and the Control Risk Groups and I decided that interviews would allow me to develop my research in an exploitable direction. My initial thesis had began to change from a Realist framework to a more narrow topic (private security analysts) and I began to realise that Realism would not be able to satisfy the requirements of the analytical tool I had in mind. I therefore secured interviews with analysts working for the company I was employed with then, Risk&Co. The CEO and chairman put their analysts at my disposal and I benefitted from enough time to work on my questions, make them relevant and in line with the way my research was evolving.

These interviews did not confirm my assumptions regarding the link between Realism and security analysis. In fact, it completely destroyed the theoretical edifice I had built prior to the interviews. It forced me into rethinking entirely my approach, highlighting the need to demonstrate that analysing in a theoretical vacuum was impossible, and that some theory should provide the framework into which security analyses could be expressed. The interviews were determinant in my quest for a more sophisticated tool than plain Realism. It forced me into exploratory thinking and opened my reflexion towards constructivism first, and cultural analysis then. It was the trigger that directed me towards the Reflexive Cultural Realism theory I was going to build.

The research strategy, although it upset my plans proved valuable in taking me into a thinking area I had not anticipated when I started the research.

Chapter 3

From analysis to forecast: Introduction to forecasting principles and techniques

In this chapter, after a brief over view of the existing literature, I will demonstrate that many private security analysts are reluctant to admit the relationship between analysis and forecast, I will discuss the principles behind existing prediction techniques used in intelligence warning and security analyses. I will then explore the toolbox available to private security analysts, describing well-known techniques and establishing their field of application. I will measure the relevance of these techniques and highlight their inherent weaknesses and shortcomings.

Part 1: Literature brief overview

The study of existing literature considered five primary areas of scholarship:

a) Forecasting as a valid undertaking for the political scientist and security analyst.

The capacity of political scientists or private security analysts to predict the future is at the centre of an academic debate about the legitimacy of prediction as a valid objective of political science. Is prediction an acceptable academic objective? And more importantly what kind of future can we reasonably expect to forecast and for what purpose?
All these questions are open to debate. None can be answered by a clear yes or no.

For Armstrong (2001:3), forecasting serves many needs. It can help people and organisations to plan for the future and to make rational decisions.

In the corporate context, security forecasting is about providing the corporate decision maker with the tools to make the appropriate decision to ensure the security of their personnel deployed abroad, and to maintain the integrity of the assets placed under their

responsibility. It does not fundamentally differ from the institutional political forecast. As Morlidge remarked:

> Every forecast is created for the purpose of making a decision. Without a purpose, forecasting is an idle pursuit not worthy of our efforts and, without clarity about the nature of the decision to be made, a forecast is unlikely to fulfil its purpose, whatever that is. (Morlidge 2011: 44)

Yet, forecasting political / security events is not part of the world of private security consultancies.

b) Theories of International Relations and political/security analysis and forecasting.

Literature on the subject is ample and varied and opinions diverge greatly about which IR theory provides the best tools to produce analyses that can be predictive. Gaddis tells us that:

> All the major theoretical approaches that have shaped the discipline of international relations since Morgenthau, had all in common, as one of their principal objectives, the anticipation of the future. (Gaddis 1993: 10)

Morgenthau is often cited as the man responsible for putting anticipation as one of the duties of the political scientist. Yet, he wrote in *Politics Among Nations* that:

> The observer is confronted with a multitude of factors, the totality of which shape(s) the future. In order to foresee the future, the observer would have to know all these factors, their dynamics, their mutual actions and reactions and so forth. What he actually knows and can know is but a small fragment of the total. He must guess – and only the future will show who chose rightly among the many possible guesses. (1993: 24)

Gaddis posited that:

> Theories provide a way of packaging patterns from the past in such a way as to make them usable in the present as guides to the future. Without them, all attempts at forecasting and prediction would be reduced to ransom guessing. (1993: 6)

c) Realism as a valid tool for analysis and forecasting.

My conviction, acquired during my IR studies at master degree level, was that Realism, seen as both a global theory of international politics and a philosophical reflection about

man as *homo politicus,* was the obvious theoretical choice for looking into the field of political prognostication, because it rested on simple tenets that seemed to epitomise the nature of international politics and its security corollary. The question asked was: can Realism, in any of its forms, help in predicting the future? And what would put Realism ahead of its main competitors? What is it, in the Realist worldview, that makes it more credible when trying to anticipate plausible futures.

Although Morgenthau, as early as 1948, argued that, 'trustworthy prophecies' in international politics would never be possible, because 'contradictory tendencies would always be present in every political situation: which of them would prevail was anybody's guess' (Morgenthau 1993: 23), Gaddis remarked that subsequent theorists of International Relations have nonetheless embraced Morgenthau's assumption that a scientific approach enhances the possibility of forecasting. Morton Kaplan in 1957 acknowledged that, although theory would be of little use in anticipating the specific actions in individuals and nations, it could 'predict characteristic(s) of model behaviour within a particular kind of international system' as well as the 'conditions under which it will be transformed, and the kind of transformation that will take place'. J. David Singer argued several years later that any analytical method should 'offer the promise of reliable prediction'. He wrote in 1969:

> As our knowledge base expands and is increasingly integrated in theoretical sense, the better our predictions will be, and therefore, the fewer policy disagreements we will have. (Cited in Gaddis 1992-3: 8)

For Barkin, the classical realist tradition began as an argument about foreign policy making, and this tradition still informs many self-identified realists. But the attempt to be predictive, to be scientific, undermines the core insight of classical Realism. Political Realism believes that polities, like society in general, are governed by objective laws. This observation seems 'to support an argument that classical Realism is about scientific prediction' (Barkin 2008: 2). But is it really?

Most classical Realists did not foster the scientific approach to foreign relations and ended up arguing explicitly that the endeavour would be futile. Thus, Arnold Wolfers argued that:

The introduction of multiple national motivations would rob the theory of the determinate and predictive character the seemed to give the pure power hypothesis its peculiar value. (Wolfers 1962: 86)

Likewise, Raymond Aron (1984: 102) reached the conclusion that 'there is no general theory of international relations comparable to the theory of economics'. For Barkin, Morgenthau was clearly on the side of the traditionalists in the debate, as were other seminal Realists (Barkin 2008: 5).

It was Neo-Realism that came to consider prediction as a legitimate goal of political analysis. Structural or Neo-Realism, in modelling itself after scientific models, became precisely what classical realists were arguing against, 'an exercise in emphasizing the predictability of international politics, rather than a cautionary note about its predictability' (Barkin 2008: 15).

As Barkin emphasizes rightly:

In their efforts to be scientific, many contemporary realists confuse prediction and prescription, and as a result, fail on both counts; if we have a predictive theory that tells us that people will of their own accord, act as power maximizers, then we do not need a prescriptive theory to tell our foreign policy decision makers to act as power balancers or maximizers. (Barkin 2010: 127)

Classical Realism was prescriptive. The seminal realists of the mid-twentieth century argued that one could not predict human behaviour, both because political actors are agents, able to act in unpredictable ways, and because of reflexivity.

Reflexivity suggests that we cannot fully understand actors. It suggests that we are likely to be projecting ourselves onto our study of others, and therefore that we should be modest in the extent to which we are willing to take such a study as authoritative. (Barkin 2008: 7)

Neo-Realism with its structural analysis of international politics aimed at bringing rationality and means to analysis and prediction.

But by operating at the international level only, Neo-Realism is faulty by design: any coherent analysis must combine an understanding of the international with that of the domestic. (Rynning & Ringmose 2008: 23)

This comment will be crucial in the development of this thesis, since I will argue that the principles of Realism can be extended from the international down to the regional and domestic level, provided it analyses coherent political units that share some constitutive characteristics.

Bueno de Mesquita, for his part, does not believe in the value of Realism as a predictive theory. For him, accurate prediction relies on human psychology and a strict application of game theory principles:

> It is a reflection of the power of logic and evidence, and testimony to the progress being made in demystifying the world of human thought and decision. (Bueno de Mesquita 2009: xix)

For Bueno de Mesquita, the realist framework is pointless. Decision makers, all of them, will take decisions that serve their best interest, irrespective of the context into which the decision-making process occurs. It is enough to understand the motivations of the main actors of a situation to predict which decisions will be taken and why. This reductionist vision of politics is in existential opposition to the basic tenets of Realism[3].

Kenneth Waltz shared with structural realists the objective of using realist theory to forecast the future. Waltz's triple images of international relations, set out in *Man, the State and War* in 1959, had explicitly predictive purposes. And in his even more influential *Theory of International Politics*, published in 1979, Waltz clarified his claims regarding prediction, in terms that did not differ greatly from those by Morgenthau and Kaplan:

> Theory explains regulation of behaviour and leads one to expect that the outcomes produced by interacting units will fall within specified ranges. The behaviour of states and of statesmen, however, is indeterminate. (1993: 9)

As Dannreuther remarks, Waltz has consistently argued that states, once their basic survival is secured, *do not* engage in a ceaseless quest for power or constantly prepare for war. This position represents the 'defensive Realism' school, where the experience of

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[3] It is noteworthy that the word Realism does not even appear in the indexes of Bueno de Mesquita's books *The Logic of Political Survival* (2005) and *Predictioneer* (2009).

history, in consolidating a stable balance of power, is seen as providing a significant source for international stability. As a consequence, the defensive school had considerably more benign expectations in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War on the future of Europe, compared to their offensive Realism colleagues. While Mearsheimer predicted a swift return to a great power competition in Europe, the defensive realist, Steven Van Evera, thought that Europe was now 'primed for peace' (Mearsheimer 1990; Van Evera 1990 in Dannreuther 2007: 38). These lower expectations are highlighted by Donnelly who underlines that Waltz himself suggested that 'his theory yields only 'indeterminate predictions' because it has simplified reality in order to highlight central social forces' (Donnelly 2000: 62). What are these central forces Waltz is referring to? Dannreuther proposes an answer:

> There is a tendency in such defensive realist accounts to relax the assumption that it is solely the distribution of power capabilities which determines state behaviour, and to introduce non-material factors such as belief, ideals and ideologies and to include the role of domestic policies. (Dannreuther 2007: 39)

Kissane remarks that Realists were among the first to make attempts to describe and then predict the new realities of post-Cold War Europe. Their predictions, rooted in a tradition that, to a large extend, did and does, define the discipline the International Relations, turned out to be far from perfect (Kissane 2006: 382). The predictive fiasco of Mearsheimer in his famous '*Back to the future*' article is probably its most striking example and has led to major criticisms as well as to a second article, *'Back to the future, Part II'* in which he replies to the acerb criticisms of Stanley Hoffman and Robert O. Keohane. These criticisms, addressed in 1990 permitted Mearsheimer to emphasize his faith in the necessity of a predictive theory of International Relations. He wrote:

> Sound predictions, however, cannot be based simply on one scholar's intuitions or judgments; they must, instead, be based on well-grounded theories. (1990: 196)

d) Review of existing forecasting techniques of political and security forecasting.

The literature about forecasting techniques is split in two groups. On the one side, writers emerging from the world of intelligence (Clark, Grabo, Khalsa) have studied the

intelligence and warning processes and produced interesting books about this topic. Their work focuses on ways of improving the approach to warning intelligence and many of their remarks and strategies can be adapted to our needs. Their approach will be documented mainly in chapter 3 of this thesis.

On the academic side, Armstrong, and Green have studied in great detail the traditional forecasting techniques such as the Delphi technique, game theory, role-playing, etc. Their work, realised exclusively in an academic environment, will be discussed in detail and the relevance of applicability to the situation that interests us, debated in chapter 3 of this thesis.

1) The research question.

The main research problem is to establish the nature of the relationship between theories of international relations and security analyses produced in the private sector. How the use of such theories can improve the skills and the performance of security analysts operating in the private sector for multi national corporations deploying a workforce and industrial assets in distant and degraded environments. The research is also about understanding what the limits of this contribution are and how these limits circumscribe the work of the analyst.

John Mearsheimer, the guru of offensive Realism, if he believes in the necessity to produce predictive analyses, is doubtful about the quality of current theories to provide such performance. In his *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), he wrote:

> I use the theory to make predictions about great power politics in the 21st century. This effort may strike some readers as foolhardy, because the study of international relations, like the other social sciences, rests on shakier theoretical foundations than that of natural sciences. Moreover, political phenomena are highly complex; hence, precise political predictions are impossible without theoretical tools that are superior to those we now possess. As a result, all political forecasting is bound to include some error. (...) Despite these hazards, social scientists should nevertheless use their theories to make predictions about the future. (Mearsheimer 2001: 8)

At the other end of the spectrum, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, claims that game theory can make the future perfectly predictable:

> In my world, science, not mumbo-jumbo, is the way to predict peoples' choice and their consequences for altering the future. I use game theory to use just that for the US government, big corporations and sometimes ordinary folks too. (Bueno de Mesquita 2009: 77)

The research question, then is: how, and how far can existing theories of International Relations, reinforced by other selected analytical tools, improve the quality of predictive analyses for the corporate decision maker?

The world of private security is thriving in the western world. Groups of analysts, in consultancies such as Control Risks Group, Exclusive Analysis, Jane's Publications and Stratfor, to name only a few, generate thousands of millions of dollars annually in providing international security forecasts to corporate clients worldwide.

Private analysts are proliferating, in the political, intelligence, economic and security spheres. One cannot count the number of confidential newsletters, articles and corporate analyses dispatched to decision makers on a weekly or monthly basis.

Apparently ignored by these mainstream political and security analysts, forecasting practitioners, operating mainly in the fields of economics and management studies, have been applying forecasting techniques for over five decades, generating an enormous amount of scholarly research. My research aims to explore both the technical and the political avenues of forecasting and see whether a bridge can be built between the theories of IR that explain political behaviour and proven and tested forecasting techniques that would improve the predictive capabilities of the private security analyst.

Studies that have addressed part of the problem emanate from two independent streams.

a) Political science and international security studies.

In the political science arena, the topic of international relations forecasting has been addressed by several political scientists and more particularly by structural or neo-realist thinkers who, with their conception of international politics as a struggle for power in an anarchic structure, consider security forecasting as one of their duties (Mearsheimer)[4]. One could safely posit that all major realist writers have dealt with international political

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[4] Although Walt on his blog authored a humorous article entitled: *Why I am not making predictions for 2011.*

forecasting at some point in their career, since Realism is both a prescriptive and a predictive paradigm.

In the field of international security forecasting there has been an ample body of literature, dealing mainly with advanced warning, and intelligence studies, but although very thorough in terms of defining indicators, and the mechanisms of advance warning, these studies (Clark, Grabo, Khalsa) fail to address the logic and principles of decision making, which is beyond the scope of warning intelligence, Petersen (2007) is an exception, but his remarks are more anecdotal than conceptualised. Furthermore, these approaches fail to place their selected techniques within a conceptualised framework; taking for granted the assumptions forming the underlying theories behind the depicted mechanisms (Herman 1996). Gill and Phythian have placed intelligence in the contextual framework of critical Realism, and suggest that the 'understanding and explanation (of the intelligence process) can be best furthered by the self-conscious development of a reflexive critical theory' (Gill & Phythian 2009: 34). But these authors theorise mainly the process of acquiring, analysing and evaluating data in order to facilitate the decision-making. They focus on the data gathering process while our purpose is to analyse the validity of the data and the applicability of tools borrowed from other fields to check how the conjunction of theory informed data and forecasting tools will improve the performance of the private security analyst.

b) Applied forecasting

One could have thought that professional forecasters would have taken pride in applying their skills to the topic of international relations. However, international politics seems to have few followers in the forecasting arena. The International Institute of Forecasters (IIF) has only two special interest groups (SIG), which relate to political science. The first one, called *Political forecasting,* is envisioned by its sponsors as a resource for scholars and practitioners interested in forecasting elections and other political events, and is driven by a quantitative approach and focuses exclusively on elections in the North American context. The second SIG called *Forecasting decisions in conflict*, focuses on forecasting in the *decision-making* process from warring parties, and provides interesting

resources on forecasting techniques such as expert judgment (unaided and structured), game theory, structured analogies and simulated interaction.

I hesitated before putting Professor Bueno de Mesquita in this category of applied forecasting. Part of his success as a political scientist and a foreign policy expert, comes from his remarkable sense of self-promotion and the use of some of the spectacular mathematical equations from forecasting economic models into the world of political science. There are definitely some elements of value in his approach, but the fact that he refuses to divulge the core of his method, his reliance on game theory as almost the only source of acceptable decision-making prediction, ignoring or belittling the importance of the cultural context creates mistrust. Bueno de Mesquita, who does not see in Realism an acceptable method of analysis, claims to have fathered a method, called the *strategic perspective*, developed and explained in his, Principles *of International Politics* (2010), *the Logic of Political Survival* (2005) and *Predictioneer* (2009)[5]. In the *Logic of Political Survival*, co–authored with Smith, Siverson and Morrow, Bueno de Mesquita, although concentrating on the narrow topic of political survival of leaders, develops a very thorough theory coupled with specific formal models to be used to predict the future (of these leaders). This theory and these models do not seem related to the kind of work private security analysts do. It appears as a very forlorn and intellectual undertaking, located miles away from the daily occupations of private security practitioners.

c) Deficiencies in the study.

Studies on security forecasting have been few. Few professional forecasters have dared venture in the uncharted territory of international relations future, probably by fear of losing credibility. According to Drucker, a prolix management writer and academic,

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[5] The method used by Bueno de Mesquita was, according to its author, rated by the CIA as giving a 90 per cent accuracy rate (Bueno de Mesquita 2009: xix).

'forecasting is not a respectable human activity and not worthwhile beyond the shortest of periods' (Drucker 1973: 124). Private security analysts, for their part, are still uncertain of the necessity of being predictive in their analysis. The bible of forecasting, Long Range Forecasting (1st edition, 1974) by J. Scott Armstrong merely touches the subject. Albert Somit, then professor at the State University of New York, with its compilation of articles gathered under a book entitled 'Political science and the study of the future', collected the most important writings on the subject from the end of the Second World War until 1974.

On the IR academic front, the political changes on the international scene in the 1970s were encouraging Keohane and Nye to refine their complex interdependence model (1977), while Waltz developed his Neo-Realism masterpiece, breaking away from the classical realists who dominated the post-war period. Donnelly aptly remarks that the Realism return to academic dominance in the 1980's paralleled the renewed emphasis on power and conflict in American foreign policy under Ronald Reagan (Donnelly 2000: 31). However, the theory set itself modest limits in terms of the capability of prediction. Waltz admitted that his theory did not aspire to determine predictions of particular actions. (1979: 21). This was confirmed when Neo-Realism failed to comprehend change on the international scene and was dealt a severe blow when eastern Europe broke away from Russian occupation. The next wave of realist thinkers, represented by Mearsheimer (offensive Realism), and Walt (defensive Realism), have made interesting contributions to the realist edifice and have shown a manifest interest in the predictive capabilities of the realist theory. However, as far as Mearsheimer and Walt are concerned, they rely, for their predictions, on an observation of the balance of power (or threat) whose definition remains as elusive, or controversial, as ever. Walt admits that, although the events confirmed his theory, he did not foresee the changes that would occur less than five years after his '*Origins of Alliances*' was published. Mearsheimer, after the fall of the (Berlin) wall, foretold chaos and mayhem in Eastern Europe, which has not, so far, materialised (Mearsheimer 1990). This does not mean that the underlying principles of their theories were wrong. It is a simple assessment that it failed to anticipate a major international political change.

Neo-classical realists, with their theory of a single explanatory variable (relative power) and a set of intervening variables (state structure and leaders perceptions and calculations of relative power), share a distinct methodological perspective characterised by detailed historical analysis and attention to causal mechanisms. They seem better equipped than their predecessors to tackle the international policy/ security predictive business. However, it seems that, so far, neo-classical realists have been using their skills to test their theory against past situations, caring not to venture too far into the future. Yet, Lobell's work about threat assessment (2009) integrates many major elements of analysis. His declared assumptions are that, as a theory of foreign policy, Neo-classical Realism explains the foreign and security of great powers, but can also account for the distinctive characteristics of regional and small powers, developing countries, or divided, warring or failed states. Neo-classical realists include both internal and external variables in their models. The complex threat identification model developed by Lobell presents a strong case filled with solid variables (systemic, sub systemic, domestic and multitiered threats), a particular value of power as a variable and, a set of assumptions about the Foreign Policy Executive (FPE) nature, capabilities and limitations (Lobell et al, 2009). How the assumptions developed in his neo-classical realist model can be merged or integrated into existing forecasting models is not known at the moment.

Realist constructivists, by bringing a social dimension to the realist philosophy, insufflate some extra power to the realist theory, compensating for some explanatory shortcomings. 'Constructivist logic', writes J. Samuel Barkin, ''gives us a framework within which to study the relationship of agent to international political structure, as well as a set of methods with which to do so'. Barkin (2010: 138) aptly remarks that Constructivism, like Realism loses its point if stretched too far. For Realism, he writes, this stretching has, historically, been in the direction of 'science', in an attempt to make a prescriptive theory of foreign policy into both predictive and systems theory. The three key compatibilities between Realism and Constructivism as defined by Barkin are: (1) a grounding in the logic of the social; (2) a recognition of historical contingency; and (3) a need for reflexivity, but are separated by the difference in focus, linked to a difference of purpose.

Part 2: From analysis to forecast: preconceived ideas

During interviews with professional analysts, two of my questions aimed to evaluate how analysts perceived the relationship between analysis and forecast.

As a reply to my first question 'Should every analysis be predictive?' Corlobe, a specialist of Asia, claimed that an analysis was of 'no interest for the decision maker if the risk at one month, three months or six months was not taken into account and clearly defined' (Corlobe interview: 24 June 2013). Trotignon argued that the wider the object of the study, the more predictive it should be and should the object be restricted in scope, the more the analyst should adopt a descriptive mode:

> Readers do not always appreciate us providing great strategic reflections. They want to know what happened and what might happen next. (Trotignon, interview: 24 June 2013)

To the question: 'What is the purpose of a good analysis?' Trotignon argued that the type of analysis (and therefore its purpose) was determined by the event itself.

> Normally an immediate analysis of an event will be written within two hours, its purpose being to inform the security manager on site and help his thinking before he meets the local decision-makers. A second analysis usually follows, three or four pages long, which is a comment on the event. Analysts can return to the event after a few days. (Trotignon, interview: 24 June 2015)

Corlobe remarked that when an event is analysed, 'a political and security forecast couldn't go very far without becoming pure speculation.' (Corlobe, interview: 24 June 2015).

Some analysts I interviewed provided different answers. For Balencie, head of the analysts' team, the relationship between analysis and forecast was not an obvious one, 'I have not really given any thought about it' he admitted. Brulport bluntly rejected the idea. They were two separate things and while analyses added value, forecasting was pure conjecture. Yet, when I asked whether the purpose of a good analysis was to forecast, suggest trends or give tools for thought to decision makers, Balencie was of the opinion that 'all three of them were equally important'. Two years earlier I had asked a very similar question to a security analyst from CRG[6] in Dubai:

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[6] Control Risks Group (CRG).

I think I agree with it, if by predictive you mean to identify and analyse trends and try to understand how, in a certain context, they may set to become long term threats; so it is really about looking at the situation now, identifying the forces and trying to forecast, what they may involve, then it is a yes. But otherwise I am always a little bit uncomfortable with the term of predicting…For the long term, we use the word forecasting rather than prediction, we don't have a crystal ball, we don't know at all what can happen, we can get it wrong too, so we do it for the best. (Bos, interview: 1 June 2011)

Hartwell, a seasoned analyst and at the time of the interview, editor of Jane's Terrorism Monitor and Jane's Islamic Affairs, confided:

I think the meaning of analysis needs to be predictive. I come from a MoD background where this is a necessity. Intelligence analysis and even all analyses have to be something that can be acted upon and there are therefore a series of steps to follow on. Jane's (tries) to be predictive because we are trying indirectly to influence policymakers. (Hartwell, interview: 19 May 2011)

These various comments, testify that the relationship between and analysis and prediction is far from being established. Although all agree that a security analysis plays a great part in highlighting trends, there is a reluctance to accept that the purpose of a security analysis is to forecast. Morgenthau was adamant that prediction and analysis were never to be mixed:

The first lesson the student of international politics must learn and never forget is that the complexities of international affairs make simple solutions and trustworthy prophesies impossible. Here the scholar and the charlatan part company. (Morgenthau 1967: 19)

Is it possible that this statement inhibited generations of security analysts who feel uncomfortable to committing themselves to the logical consequences of their own analyses? The duality of their answers that the future is unpredictable but that analyses should uncover trends, suggest that there is a consensus at least on the fact that uncovering trends should be part of an analysis' objectives.

1. Forecasting principles and concepts

Hartwell emphasized the fact that, as part of the commissioning process, contributors to Jane's publications were made aware that their articles needed to be predictive.

To prevent the 'so what?' commentary from the customer, we impress on our contributors that they must answer the questions: what does this all mean? Why is this important going

forward? Why is this important in six months' time? We do not prescribe how far contributors should predict, but we say: please, tell what is going to happen and why this is going to happen. (Hartwell, interview: 19 May 2011)

Forecasting is a multidimensional exercise. It can be approached from different perspectives and undertaken at different levels. Analysts forecast to respond to specific demands, to satisfy the purposes of particular agendas. Caillaud listed the traditional missions of the Department of Strategic Analysis at Risk&Co, which could be summarised as an accompaniment of clients in their international negotiations (good repute studies, due diligence, decisional network cartography), and assistance in the implementation of projects in degraded and volatile environments. An early warning tool is also offered to corporate customers that measure transversal or lateral threats such as terrorism and organised crime, a standard practice in corporate security. All these tasks have an element of forecast in their approach.

In this thesis, I privilege challenges facing private analysts serving MNCs operating in unstable and degraded environments. My research main purpose is to improve the scope of international security analysts/forecasters, by providing them with advice, support, guidance and method. It intends to evaluate existing techniques that have either been tested in an academic context or applied in the field. It aims to help improve international security forecasting and suggests a theoretical discussion about principles, methods and techniques. It is the price to pay if security forecasting is to gain in credibility. To do so, forecasting must be practical, methodical and result-orientated.

a. Extrapolation, Projection and Forecast

It is important to frame what international security forecasting means. As Gill and Phythian remarked:

Broadly speaking, analysts are deployed to produce two main types of analysis: tactical (short term or limited in area) and strategic (long term or more extensive in area) (Gill & Phythian 2006: 85)

To produce these analyses, different approaches are required. Clark defines three different approaches to predictions: extrapolation, projection and forecast. Although these three words are often used interchangeably, they actually are different concepts.

i. Extrapolation

Extrapolation is probably the method most commonly used by journalists and analysts. Jouvenel (2010: 44) underlined that:

> Prediction, whatever the method employed, is based mainly on the extrapolation of trends observed in the past. It postulates that everything will change in the same fashion, to the same rhythm, and in the same direction. (Jouvenel 2010: 44)

Extrapolation, confirms Clark, is 'the most conservative method of prediction. In its simplest form, extrapolation extends a simple curve on a graph based on historical performance' (Clark 2007: 196). It is also the technique most commonly used by analysts because of the time constraints imposed upon them. Most of the time, the analyst will resort to extrapolation because it is the easiest thing to do, the quickest and the most susceptible to being granted immediate acceptance. Extrapolation is often accurate in the short term because inertia, this natural resistance of forces, may maintain the illusion that things will remain the same forever. Inertia, in physics as in human organisations, makes the status quo the normal unfolding of things.

ii. Projection

Projection is an extrapolation to which a pinch of uncertainty is added. A projection accepts that forces created a situation, but considers the possibility of these same forces exerting themselves differently in the future. The game of alliances, for example, always susceptible to change, will modify the balance of forces, and this modification will impact on the *course of events*. Projection is, according to Clark, more reliable than extrapolation.

> It predicts a range of likely futures based on the assumption that the forces that have operated in the past will change, whereas extrapolation assumes that they will not. (Clark 2007: 200)

Clark (2007:208) argues that even the best-prepared projections seem very conservative when compared to the reality years later. New political, economic, social, technological

or military developments create results that were not foreseen by experts in a field. Typically, forecasters call these new developments disruptive technologies or disruptive events. To take these disruptive events into account, one is forced to move to the highest level of prognostication: the forecast.

iii. Forecast

The major objective of forecasting, for Clark, (…) is to define *alternative futures* of the target question, not the most likely future.

> The alternative futures are usually scenarios. The development of alternative futures is essential for effective strategic decision-making. Since there is no single predictable future, customers need to formulate strategy in the context of alternative future states of the target. (Clark 2007: 209)

In the following section, the nature and purpose of scenarios will be discussed, as well as how they can contribute to improve decision-making. The nature and complexity of forecasting implies that only multidisciplinary analysts can succeed at it. There is some kind of all-encompassing knowledge requirement to make judgement calls integrating variables as diverse as geography, international politics, new technologies, cultural beliefs, societal determinism and use them effectively to create plausible scenarios. A versatile analyst is a requirement to provide a good forecast.

2. Forecasting applied to International Security

Forecasting international security should rely on theoretical and methodological principles. Armstrong was the first academic to establish principles as a basis from which to build forecasts. He wrote: 'Principles should be supported by empirical evidence' (Armstrong 1985: 2001).

Understanding the reasons behind the customer's request will help the analyst provide appropriate answers through relevant scenarios. International security forecasting, like all forecasting, must be performed with a target question, a purpose and an audience: this is called the contingent forecast.

Armstrong's 'principles' represent advice, guidelines, prescriptions, condition-action statements and rules. Through his demarche, Armstrong intended to firmly establish

forecasting in the realm of natural or empirical science. He insisted on the fact that these principles have a purpose. Forecasting aims to provide decision-makers with tools or at least aides for decision. Armstrong suggested that the forecasting process should comprise the six following stages[7]:
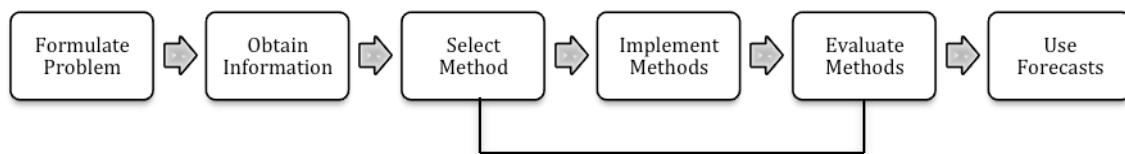

Figure 1: Armstrong's 6-stage forecasting process

For analysts, controlling consistency and getting rid of biases are well known impediments. Biases are numerous and often imperceptible. All analysts interviewed were very conscious that bias was detrimental to forecast objectivity and accuracy, but all were convinced that their biases were minor, peer-controlled and almost negligible in terms of intellectual rigour.

This bias issue is all the more difficult to control when it is not acknowledged by individuals and when both the analyst and the customer share identical worldviews. Being the product of identical societal constructions, this is, of course, often the case.

Although forecasting is based on principles, processes guide it. A process is defined as a number of stages unfolding in a rigorous and logical manner from the definition of the problem to the delivery of the solution. The four step standard methodological process recommended by Harvey is: (1) choice of forecast method; (2) application of forecast method; (3) combination of forecasts, and (4) evaluation of forecasts (Harvey 2001: 63). From this simple list, one infers that different forecast methods or techniques are available to the analyst and that some may be more appropriate than others to answer specific questions. One also understands that there may be different ways of applying a method, that several methods can be combined and that the outcome needs to be measured against the reliability of the methods and techniques employed. Some techniques will be more adapted to qualitative demands while others will integrate statistics and provide quantitative data to answer or illustrate qualitative assertions. Often, analyses and

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[7] Exhibit 3 Stages of forecasting in Armstrong 2001, page 8.

forecasts will include both qualitative and quantitative data. Nevertheless, whether they are the epicentre of an argument or simply support each other, qualitative and quantitative data will have eventually to be transformed into a judgement call and interpreted by the analyst. From the choice of the forecast method to the evaluation of forecasts, judgment calls will be the norm, and analysts will have to make choices, tainted with biases and prejudices that principles and processes intend to alleviate. By multiplying the safeguards, forecaster theoreticians want to provide impeccable methodologies that will minimise interference, inconsistency and biases.

> Forecasts can be sub-optimal in two ways: inconsistency and bias. People intent on improving their forecasts should minimise these components of forecast error. Inconsistency is a random or unsystematic deviation from the optimal forecast, whereas bias is a systematic one. (Harvey 2001: 59)

Seasoned analysts are very much aware of these dangers, as this anonymous article extracted from the Exclusive Analysis yearbook 2010 underlines:

> Delivery of correct forecasts requires multiple layers of audit, both internal and external, to discipline both the individual's judgment and avoid 'group think', information from human source's conflicts of interest, political preference degree of risk aversion, competence and access. (Exclusive Analysis 2010: 40).

Audit is indeed a feature all analysts I have personally met and interviewed approve and are familiar with. All concurred that their work, was systematically audited, collegially assessed and sometimes peer revised before publication or delivery. However, if auditing seems to have become the norm, one should understand that it is only one of the guidelines that practitioners should use to improve their forecasting capabilities both in terms of accuracy, impartiality and relevance. Harvey established a list of seven principles aimed to improve judgment in forecasting and avoid suboptimal performance at different stages of the forecasting process. They are:

> (1) The value of checklists (2) The importance of establishing agreed criteria for selecting forecast methods (3) The retention and use of forecast records to obtain feedback (4) The use of graphical rather than tabular data displays (5) The advantages of fitting lines through graphical displays when making forecasts (6) The advisability of using multiple methods to assess uncertainly in forecasts, and (7) The need to ensure that people assessing the chances of a plan's success are different from those who develop and implement it. (Harvey 2001: 59)

The purpose of these principles is to make forecast less prone to flaw, bias and partiality. They are not principles[8] as generally assumed, but rather guidelines in the form of stages of an implementation method, or even a template that analysts should follow to ensure that phases are dealt with in the correct sequence and that none is forgotten. By following these guidelines, the forecast can only benefit from a recognised and accepted methodology and gain in credibility.

Applying these guidelines provides a *modus operandi* that directs and controls an intellectual process. Showing impeccable method will also grant credibility to the analyst, which, in turn, shall weigh favourably upon acceptance. As we mentioned earlier, one forecasts for a purpose, which often means to serve a client, in the private analyst's case, the corporate decision-maker. The forecast should be contingent – or to use Clark's terminology target-*centric*. It should also be bespoke to the personality and the expectations of the customer.

This section has shown that a lot of thinking has been dedicated to methods and techniques. It seems though that much less research has been dedicated to the intellectual approach about the way to feed these sequences. There is a crucial need to theorise the way analysts should populate each step of the methods, both in terms of questions asked and in terms of responses provided. Without a solid theory to support the analyst in their quest for a workable description of reality, any method will reflect the biases of a group of similarly educated people, sharing comparable prejudices towards misunderstood cultural attitudes and inclined to apply respond similarly to misinterpreted political situations.

3. Definition and limits of forecasting

   a. Contingent and unconditional forecast

All along in this thesis, I will argue that in order to forecast international security and measure the impact of related threats at a micro-level, the analyst should apply principles, methods and guidelines expressed within an IR theoretical framework.

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[8] A principle is a fundamental truth or law as the basis of reasoning or action (The Concise Oxford dictionary 9th edn.).

The scope of this study is limited to analysing situations of potential tension and crises and forecast undesired security events - consequences of threatening, or potentially threatening, situations, social tensions and/or security crises either between one or several nation-states or at a domestic level - that MNCs deploying expatriates to emerging countries could face.

Because Realism is both a theory of international relations and a political philosophy, I initially considered embedding the analysis within a simple Realist framework, because (1) I could not accept that an idea could be expressed in a vacuum and (2) because a theory that revolves around the idea of power and group interests would be able to answer most questions about the cultural conception of power, its use, and determine resulting security threats.

Having spent a great part of my working life practicing security in emerging countries, (seventeen years in Africa and twelve years the Middle East), I know by experience that in such regions, where most of the International Joint Ventures (IJV) in this early century operate, power remains the sole currency, and political groups of interest are constantly fighting for more of it, resulting in persistent rivalry, politically motivated violence reflecting unstable, or sometimes very stable, balances of power. In such places, the relative legitimacy of power and the existence of actionable forces determine the level of security the host country is likely to provide and what the MNCs management can reasonably expect.

If brute power is the currency in such regional politics, it is the capability of host nations to protect the MNCs assets that provide the paramount condition of international business projects: that is security. To understand the security equation, the analyst is well advised to apply a Realist framework, or at least a Realist approach to the situation at hand. I argue that realist thinking rules areas of conflicts and tensions consciously or not. As Keohane highlighted:

> Even as long ago as the time of Thucydides, political Realism contained three key assumptions: (1) states are the key units of action, (2) they seek power, either as an end in itself or as a means to other ends (3) they behave in ways that are, by and large, rational, and therefore comprehensible to outsiders in rational terms. These premises do not, by themselves

constitute the base for a science; they do not establish propositions linking causes with effects. Yet, they have furnished a usable, interpretative framework for observers from Thucydides onwards. (Keohane 1986: 7)

I initially thought that applying the simple tenets of Realism to the micro-level decisions would provide a solid method to anticipate threats, measure risk and understand security issues. Although Realism is a theory of international relations, I argue that its principles can apply even to the lowest form of human collectivity, the ethnic group, the tribe, even the clan, provided such political entities share a historically-embedded common culture, political interests and aspirations and are ready to fight for them. After all, the struggles for power of Greek cities of Antiquity and Italian cities of the Renaissance are often cited as fine illustrations of Realist behaviour.

However, the diversity of Realism proved a challenge to my reflection since 'Realism is a big tent with room for a number of different theories that make quite different predictions' (Elman 1996: 26). Although the multiplicity of Realisms made my choice difficult, I was and remain convinced that Realism, in any of its forms (classical, structural, and neo-classical) was better equipped than other IR theories to analyse and forecast security issues framed by power struggles.

The failure of (Realist) academia to anticipate the end of the Cold War is often cited as the example of the lack of an effective forecasting theory in international relations (Gaddis, 'International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3). Cox, however, showed that the fall of the Soviet Union was predictable and had been anticipated by a several scholars (among them Emmanuel Todd (1976); Helene Carrère d'Encausse (1980), or first-hand observers such as the Russian dissident Andrei Amalrik (1970). But Cox perceptively remarked that 'their words carried very little weight at the time' (Cox 2009:163) because:

> Those who made these predictions were really quite peripheral to the mainstream debate – whether that debate was taking place in universities, in the wider foreign policy community or on the broad left. (Cox 2009: 172)

The reason behind academic and think-tank pundits' failure to listen to discordant, but just voices, may have had little to do with theoretical debates. For Cox, academia, for structural and historical reasons, did not encourage scholars to study the Soviet Union's

possible future. First and foremost, there seemed to be no uncertainty about the future. The world as it was known would last until the next predictable war. Only the nature, the extent and the timing of this war were open for discussion. Nobody really thought that ideas could vanquish the communist system we had lived with for so long and which survived so many conflicts (World War II, the Korean war, and the decolonisation wars of the 1950's and 60's). Was this prognostication failure due to an absence of method, a lack of relevant theory to understand what was proceeding under our very eyes, a refusal by analysts to acknowledge the *winds of change* or merely were we still being influenced by the effects of an old-fashioned but still effective soviet propaganda? Was it also because full academic and civil service careers had been built upon the maintenance of a dual antagonistic system and its idiosyncrasies? All these causes may have played a role, but the main reason may simply have been that the world was so much balanced in favour of the ultimate winner of the Cold War, that living in an intellectual status quo was a convenient way of apprehending international security and leading comfortable careers. As one of the analysts[9] interviewed in Neuilly confirmed:

> In the public service, careers are made on the status quo. People who became top analysts close to government circles put their careers before everything and really hesitate to 'rock the boat'. (Trotignon, interview: 24 June 2013)

As Grabo wrote, analysts are often uncomfortable with changes that challenge their knowledge:

> It is a phenomenon of intelligence, as of many fields of investigation and analysis, that the appearance of new types of information or data of a kind not normally received poses difficult problems – and that the reaction is likely to be extremely conservative. The conservatism or slowness to accept or even to deal with new information is a product of several factors. One is simply a basic tenet of good research – that judgement should be withheld in such cases until sufficient unambiguous data are available that we can be sure of the meaning and significance of the information. (…) Still, another and often very important factor may be that the intelligence organisation is not prepared to handle this type of information of analysis; there is no one assigned to this kind of problem, so that it ends to be set aside or its existence may not even be recognised. And finally, there is a great reluctance on the part of many individuals and probably most bureaucratic organisations to stick their necks out on problems,

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[9] Interview with the Risk&Co Analysts, Group 1: 24 June 2013, Neuilly-sur-Seine.

which are new, controversial, and above all, which could be bad news for higher officials and the policymaker. (Grabo 2004:45)

In summary, the inability to anticipate the most sudden political event of the second half of the twentieth century was due to a multitude of factors, cultural, bureaucratic, societal and psychological. The absence of a proper theory taking culture and beliefs seriously, of effective techniques or simply the absence of free-spirited and risk-taking analysts is also a reason for such a failure.

Gaddis posited that the lack of a proper theory was responsible for this failure.

> Although international relations theorists have agreed on the importance of predictions and forecasting, they have by no means agreed on how to construct the theories that must be in place prior to performing these tasks. (Gaddis 1992-3: 11)

He suggested that a valid theory (different from the traditional theories like Realism and Liberalism) was a prerequisite to any relevant forecast, and the relationship between a theory of international relations and an effective forecasting model was at best in its infancy. Alas, Gaddis' argument applies to unconditional forecasting, and by doing so he just stated the obvious, that the Future, with a big F, could not be predicted. One can only agree with this statement.

b. The limits of forecasting

The purpose of a security prediction in a corporate context is to produce a snapshot of the security posture of a project in its environment, and suggest the nature and magnitude of threat that could jeopardise the project and its assets. By doing so, it must give the corporate decision maker the right information that will allow them to take the best possible decisions for the project integrity and continuation. Forecasting security events is not about foretelling the future but about suggesting possible or rather plausible futures, through the use of scenarios.

The core argument of this chapter is that prognosticating events out of the blue, what Schrodt labelled the *unconditional forecast*, is not only impossible, but also pointless and unproductive since a request for a forecast is a demand created by a purpose. Corporate security customers have to make decisions to protect their human assets and investment deployed abroad. They are accountable for the safety of their people and must have

precise responses to their interrogations in order to make appropriate business prudent decisions. As Morlidge postulates:

> Every forecast is created for the purpose of making a decision. Without a purpose, forecasting is an idle pursuit not worthy of our efforts, and without clarity about the future about the nature of the decision to be made, a forecast is unlikely to fulfil its purpose, whatever it is. (Morlidge 2011: 44)

Forecast, thus, must be performed for an audience, a sponsor, a customer, or anybody with a power of decision that may influence the future in any significant way. The purpose of a forecast is not to predict the future. Its purpose is, in the corporate context, to provide pragmatic guidance. (Caillaud, Balencie: 2013 and Hartwell: 2011). There is a misconception shared up to the highest level of decision-making that makes the words forecast and prediction synonyms. As Morlidge underlines:

> Forecast providers and customers of the process can have conflicted views of what a forecast represents. There is sometimes a mistaken belief that forecasts paint an immutable picture of futures. In reality, forecasts are intended to prompt interventions, some of which may change the course of events, thereby invalidating the predictions. (Morlidge 2011: 6)

The relationship between prediction, context and purpose is central to our understanding of the limits of forecasting. Both contents and formulation of the forecast will depend heavily on the context from which such a request originates. In the world of intelligence, international politics or corporate security, the question asked by the customer, the context in which the question is being asked, the nature of the problem, the constraints of time, a multiplicity of pressure factors, the potential consequences of action not only define the limits of the forecast, but give it a unique orientation. An international security forecast is milieu related and must be expressed within constraints imposed by a definite context in order to satisfy the corporate decision maker specific needs. Furthermore, as Neustadt & May (1986: 92) remarked:

> Even with situations and concerns clearly defined, one set of questions need to be answered before debate turns to options for action: What is the objective? What is action supposed to accomplish? What conditions do we want to bring in place of the one existing now? Knowing how the concerns emerge, how the situation evolves, how the constraints multiply, can help. (Neustadt & May 1986: 92)

By understanding the events that led to the forecast request, the analyst can answer these concerns with purposefulness and relevance. If limits are properly established, the forecast has more chance of fulfilling its purpose. To this effect, I will explain Clark's concept of the target-centric approach and then examine methods of forecasting that have been tested, mainly in an academic research context.

c. The target centric approach

The first task of analysts dealing with the future is to limit their work to the target itself to avoid the danger of unconditional prediction. The advantages of the target-centric approach are fourfold. First, it allows a focus on a precise issue (the target), composed with specific elements, unambiguous assumptions and explicit forces, which apply to it. Secondly, it reduces bias and overconfidence since it studies a precise point of contention. Thirdly, a target centric-approach mixes the needs for theoretical and practical items of information. Both the regional analyst, in their London or Paris office, and the security consultant deployed abroad, can look for and collect relevant items of information to work towards the resolution of target-questions and provide practical items of information that are first theorised by the analyst and later incorporated in their report. Finally, the target-centric approach is a flexible concept that 'lends itself readily to techniques, such as Delphi, for avoiding negative group dynamics' (Clark 2007: 128).
Delphi is part of specific forecasting techniques I am now going to describe and evaluate. Almost all of these techniques are the product of post-World War 2 US think tanks and were tested and developed in academic and institutional environments.

d. The PSA toolbox: principles, methods and techniques

Private security analysts have at their disposal a palette of predictive techniques that they can use to approach or refine their work. These techniques are not new, and as Clark writes:

> They have evolved over the past five centuries, as mathematics and science have evolved. They frequently reappear with new names, even though their underlying principles are centuries old. (Clark 2007: 175)

For Armstrong:

These techniques must be chosen according to the situation at hand. Role-playing, for example, appears more recommended when dealing with conflict while a simple extrapolation exercise can be sufficient when short-range results are sought. (Armstrong 2001: 5)

Yet, the result of my interviews with seasoned professional analysts revealed that none of these techniques, apart of course for judgemental methods, were used in consultancies. Analysts were ignorant of most of them and sometimes event unaware of their existence. Caillaud's remark that 'no analyst was ever trained in forecasting' (Caillaud, interview: 25 June 2013), was confirmed by the comments of analysts interviewed in the UK, France and Dubai. Even when these techniques were acknowledged, they were dismissed out of hand for reasons such as lack of time and customer's pressure for immediate comments that made these techniques disconnected from realities of the market. Yet, these techniques exist and should be explored to examine if, how and to what extent they could improve security analyses.

I have selected in this chapter five classic techniques available to forecast international security. They have been used by pundits and discussed and tested by academics. There is a sufficient body of literature to discuss the pros and cons of each and their conditions of use. None, however, provides a complete approach to analysis. This is why Armstrong recommends that: 'When selection is difficult, combine forecast from different methods' (Armstrong 2001: 365).

What are these techniques?

e. Technique 1: Judgemental methods

Forecasts produced through judgemental methods are elaborated by subject matter experts, based on their knowledge, experience, skills and intuition. They are the simplest and most common prediction techniques. Judgemental techniques fit the natural intellectual inclination of analysts to produce their work in isolation. Analysts using judgemental methods, which are basically an intuitive approach, can often reach notoriety in some circles because of their credentials, attitude and media exposure. This expertise is not always linked to the accuracy of their prediction, but rather to the assertiveness of their character and a solid network. For Evans:

> Because they often overestimate the extent of their knowledge, they will make more mistakes in judgment than people with greater risk intelligence, but they will also project more charisma and authority. (Evans 2012: 103)

Since onlookers often mistake confidence for competence, these analysts tend to be overconfident and very disdainful of existing techniques, which they reject because, when it comes to analysis, they do not believe that safety lies in numbers. The analyst is a subject matter expert, and his role and duty, is to gain more knowledge, more expertise, and project more competence. In this vision of forecasting, knowledge experience and literary style are everything, forecasting techniques an encumbrance; these experts see the quality of their analyses taking the shape of a regular hyperbole, fed by their accumulated knowledge, experience and professional exposure. The result is a strong forecast, expressed assertively, which has the best chance to convince the decision-maker. As Evans remarks: 'How many of us would trust an analyst who would say: I am not sure?' (2012: 103).

Judgemental forecasts are therefore prone to psychologically documented shortcomings. For Stewart:

> All judgement forecast, will be affected by inherent unreliability, or inconsistency in the judgment process. Psychologists have studied this problem extensively, but forecasters rarely address it. (Stewart 2001: 81)

Researchers and theorists have described two types of unreliability that can reduce the accuracy of judgemental forecast: (1) the unreliability of information acquisition, and (2) the unreliability of information processing. To this succinct list, one can add the following remarks:

> Judgements are less reliable when the task is more complex, when the environment is uncertain, when the acquisition of information relies on perception, pattern recognition, or memory; and when people use intuition instead of analysis. (Stewart 2001: 81)

Judgement based forecasts are bound to reflect the natural inconsistencies and shortcomings of human nature, such as an accumulation of various biases and flawed assumptions. Judgement calls can only be generated on the basis of the information collected, and analysts cannot grasp the whole picture of variables and indicators necessary to fully understand a situation. This also applies to analysts working in groups.

The problem of information acquisition has been well summarised in the *known and unknown unknowns*, attributed to Donald Rumsfeld, but which clearly predates his famous declaration (Gill and Phythian 2006: 143) [10]. There are indeed known and unknown *unknowns* that will not be made available to the analysts in general and there is not much one can do, except try to know more, read more, think more, individually and collectively.

The second shortcoming has been identified as a weakness in data processing. Harvey identified six possible explanations for the lack of reliability of judgment:

1. A failure of cognitive control.
2. An overloading working memory.
3. A recursive weight estimation during learning.
4. Learning correlations rather than learning functions.
5. Reproducing noise.
6. Deterministic rule switching.

Harvey (2001) has proposed six principles to facilitate improved judgment in forecasting. He recommends:

1. The use of checklists of categories of information relevant to the forecasting task

In other words, variables should not be used only on the basis of recent history, as is often the case, but should also take into account recent or expected changes in variables. The analyst should use a checklist of variables that past experience has shown to be relevant to the forecast and complete it with new ones, case related. Harvey remarks that people are frequently influenced by information that is not relevant to their tasks; checklists can serve to remind people of factors relevant to their forecast and to warn them against being influenced by other categories of information. The proposed basis to compile the checklists is defined as the 'accumulated wisdom within an organisation'.

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[10] *'There are known knowns; there are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns; that is to say, there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns – there are things we do not know we don't know'.*

Declaration by Donald Rumsfeld on 12 February 2002, before the invasion of Iraq.

2. The establishment of explicit and agreed criteria for adopting a forecast method

Security analysts need to decide which techniques they will use for the specific forecast. Although the forecast will remain judgemental in nature, the choice of a method may ensure procedural consistency, with the added advantage of keeping some biases in check.

3. Keep records of forecasts and use them appropriately to obtain feedback

Harvey, like several others, insists on the issue of feedback. Feedback can improve judgment and help control hindsight bias (Fischoff & Beyth 1975; Fischoff 2001 and 2007; Evans 2012). Hindsight bias is the most important factor of continuous and repeated inaccuracy. The hindsight bias causes forecasters to overestimate the quality of their initial forecast, and is a well-known memory distortion. Can anything be done to reduce hindsight bias? Simply warning people about its dangers seems to have almost no effect. Evans joins Fischoff in suggesting that the best remedy is 'to record predictions as one makes them and review the notes regularly' (Evans 2012: 95).

4. Study data in graphical rather than tabular form when making judgement forecast

Although this recommendation stems from sales-related forecasts, it is an interesting remark. It may not always be suitable to international security issues since few variables and indicators in international affairs forecasts can be presented in a graphic form. Yet, when possible, analysts should endeavour to use graphs, charts and pies to express quantities, in order to support their discourse while being aware of the possibility of falling into the *quantitative fallacy*'s trap. Security analysts might think they will gain credibility by involving in their report figures, numbers, statistics and the like. Information appearing in tables, graphs or numbers is surrounded by an aura of authority difficult to surpass. Nobody would deny that serious information should appear in tables, graphs, or numbers, whenever possible. Schwartz, though, objects that:

> Important questions about the future are usually too complex or imprecise for the conventional languages of business and science and that the language of stories and myths are often preferred to the language of mathematics. (1998: 8)

Hackett Fischer refers to the systematic use of figures as the *quantitative fallacy* concept which consists in the idea that:

> The facts which count best count most. It is a criterion of significance, which assumes that facts are important in proportion to their susceptibility to quantification… (However) many ideational and emotional problems which lie at the heart of (historical) problems cannot be understood in quantitative terms. (Hackett Fischer 1970: 90)

This issue is not recent. Historians who promoted cliometrics were determined to bring a scientific approach to history. Forced to focus on what could be measured, cliometricians failed to integrate variables such as opinions, ideas, myths and cultural beliefs, dwarfing the field of historical research. There is no possible denial that figures and graphs have their use. But their purpose should be to illustrate a statement, not to drive the research. Schrodt warned us about the abusive use of figures and the danger of data mining which he defines as:

> Taking a very large number of variables, cramming them into a generic model, crunching the numbers and then accepting the results irrespective of whether they make any theoretical sense. Using figures for the sake of figures is tempting because it is easy, it looks impressive; and it actually works in applications where one is interested only in unconditional forecast 'to the exclusion of explanatory or manipulation of the underlying variables. (Schrodt 2002: 4)

But it also leads to what Hackett-Fischer labelled the *fallacy of statistical impressionism,* which occurs whenever a historian (in our case a security analyst) 'casts an imprecise, impressionistic interpretation into exact numbers' (Hackett Fischer 1970: 13).

What all this tells us is that some situations lend themselves to the use of numbers and graphs while others simply do not and that circumspection, as well as common sense, must be applied to ensure an appropriate use of figures, if at all, in a forecast.

5. *Use more than one way of judging the degree of uncertainty in forecasts*

Armstrong has also recommended using multiple methods to reduce bias and inconsistency in forecasts. And those who gave some thought about judgmental forecast have to my knowledge supported this suggestion.

6. *Have different people write and validate the forecast*

Finally, Harvey recommends that the person responsible for developing and implementing a plan of action should not estimate its probability of success. In other words, the report should be evaluated by one or more analysts before it is considered as definitive and customer ready. This recommendation concerns the effectiveness of actions rather than the correctness of views.

In spite of its apparent lack of method, judgemental forecasting should not be discarded offhandedly since, as Armstrong admits, in many situations, experts can make excellent forecasts. Experts' opinions, however, are traditionally marred with biases and shortcomings. For Armstrong:

> Much is known about the cause of these limitations and there are solutions to reduce their detrimental effects. Some solutions are simple and inexpensive, such as 'there is safety in numbers' and 'structure the collection and analysis of experts' opinions. (Armstrong 2001: 57)

The problem is acknowledged and solutions do exist. I am of the opinion that Harvey's principles should be used as guidelines to limit and control the inevitable biases of judgmental forecasts. Analysts use judgement in choosing models or methods, in specifying parameters, in selecting historical data, in conducting uncertainty analyses and in interpreting results (Armstrong 1985; Fischoff 1988; Morgan & Henrion 1990: 543). Judgemental forecasts remain the main and more reliable source of international security forecasting, in spite of its acknowledged deficiencies. The reason is simply that all forecasting methods and techniques are conditioned by an expert judgement.

f. Technique 2: The Delphi technique

The Delphi technique is the least unfamiliar of the techniques used in forecasting, contingent or unconditional, known by the analysts I interviewed. It is a method for obtaining independent forecast from a panel of experts over two or more rounds, with summaries of the anonymous results provided to the participants after each round. Designed by individuals at the RAND Corporation in the 1950's, this technique has been widely used for 'aiding judgemental forecasting and decision-making in a variety of domains and disciplines' (Rowe and Wright 2001: 126).

The Delphi process is *anonymous*; controlled by what some call a judge, and which authority must be acknowledged by the group, *iterative* since the conclusions of the first rounds are communicated to each panellist for deeper reflection, and one would think, *reasonable* in its outcomes since the forecast is fostered from the anonymous estimate of experts on the final round.

When is the use of Delphi technique appropriate? Rowe and Wright suggest that the process should be used:

> To elicit and combine expert opinion when expert judgement is necessary because the use of statistical methods is inappropriate, when information is scarce – and one must then rely on opinion. (2001: 135)

Moreover, they suggest that Delphi may also be appropriate 'when disagreements between individuals are likely to be severe or politically unpalatable'. (Rowe and Wright 2001: 138). They posit that studies have shown that collections of individuals make more accurate judgements and forecast in Delphi groups than in unstructured groups, but that does not mean that Delphi will prognosticate right. The reality is less conclusive. According to the famous GIGO[11] theory, the Delphi technique is as good as what it is made of, to begin with the panellists. In my experience, it is uncommon that panellists possess an equivalent level of expertise and experience. The consequence is that the most experienced panellists will be very reluctant to change their opinion between rounds, because they consider that their seniority gives them a better assessment of the situation than that of their younger colleagues. Young analysts, on the other hand, will be influenced by old hands, and the fact that panellist's opinion tend to converge over rounds may simply be the result of experience obstinacy on one side, and youthful lack of self-confidence on the other. In Delphi, the forecast is generally accepted when opinions converge, but I fear that they tend to converge towards the most senior analysts preferred outcome and most forceful ego. The second issue is the one surrounding the nature of the questions. As we have already emphasised, bias infiltrates questions. Hauser et al (1975), Tversky & Kahneman (1973, 1981) have worked on the importance of the phrasing in questioning and the impact of emotional words or phrases. The conclusion of their studies

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[11] Garbage In, Garbage Out.

is that, if one wants to minimise a bias response, one should: (1) frame questions in a balanced manner; (2) use clear and succinct definitions and avoid emotive terms; (3) avoid incorporating irrelevant information into questions; (4) give estimates of uncertainty as frequencies rather than probabilities or odds.

Gigerenzer (1994) provided empirical evidence that the untrained mind is not equipped to reason about uncertainty using subjective probabilities, but is able to reason successfully about uncertainties using frequencies. When historical frequencies are not obvious, claim Goodwin and Wright (1998), perhaps because the event to be forecast is really unique, then the only way to assess the likelihood of the event is to use a subjective probability produced by judgemental heuristics. Arkes warns us that such heuristics can lead to overconfidence (2001). For Evans (2012), these heuristics, or cognitive shortcut:

> Can also lead the analyst towards availability heuristic (based on the principle that anything easily retrieved from memory is usually perceived as more probable than the absent past event), wishful thinking (another form of optimism bias), confirmation bias (the tendency to pay more attention to information that confirms what we already believe and to ignore contradictory data), and mind-reading illusion (the tendency to think that we are better at reading other people than we really are), 'all items of a polymorph overconfidence bias'. (Evans 2012: 70-73)

Finally, the Delphi technique, from a cultural standpoint, cannot avoid reflecting the biases and prejudices of the judge and panellists in the selection and formulation of questions. In spite of its collaborative method, it tends to aggregate prejudices and produce a short-sighted response to any issue. Claiming fairness, it reduces contestation and creates monolithic answers. All this should make us seriously think about the value of the Delphi technique. Critics of the RAND Delphi technique trials argued that the Delphi technique 'was sloppily executed' (Stewart 1987); that 'questionnaires tended to be poorly worded and ambiguous' (Hill & Fowles 1975) and that 'the analyses of responses were often superficial' (Linstone 1975). For Sackman:

> Explanations for the poor conduct of early studies have ranged from the technique's apparent simplicity encouraging people without the requisite skills to use it (Linstone and Turoff 1975), to suggestions that early Delphi researchers had poor background in the social science and hence lacked acquaintance with appropriate methodologies. (Sackman 1975: 139)

Grabo, basing her judgement on forty years of experience in an American intelligence context, warns: 'it is obvious that the technique should be applied with care' (Grabo 2004: 154). Should it be dismissed without any further ado? Not so fast, say Rowe & Wright. In spite of inconsistent application of the techniques, their research has shown that Delphi-like groups provide better forecasts than other judgemental approaches. To achieve optimal results, they suggest:

(1) The use of experts with appropriate domain knowledge (2) The use of heterogeneous experts (3) The use of between five and twenty experts (4) For Delphi feedback, provide the mean or median estimate of the panel plus the rationales from all panellists for their estimates (5) Continue Delphi polling until the responses show stability. Generally, three structured rounds are enough (6) Obtain the final forecast by weighing all the experts' estimates equally and aggregating them (7) In phrasing questions, use clear and succinct definitions and avoid emotive terms (8) Frame questions in a balanced manner (9) Avoid incorporating irrelevant information into questions (10) When possible, give estimates of uncertainly as frequencies rather than probabilities or odds and finally (11) Use coherence checks when eliciting estimates of probabilities'. (Rowe & Wright 2001: 141)

Needless to say, these conditions are never met in the corporate world of security. Constraints of time would prevent these recommendations from being implemented. In corporate security analysis, time is of the essence. Nevertheless, Rowe & Wright recommendations can be considered as generic guidelines to be used or at least approached whenever possible.

Delphi could be practicable if a pool of comparably skilled and experienced analysts were working on the same 'patch', with a reasonable time allowance to reach results.

g. Technique 3: Role-playing

I must confess that, although I know many security analysts, I have never met a single one of them who participated in a role-playing exercise as part of their professional life. Yet, a substantial amount of academic literature on the topic exists. Academics in various fields have studied at length the pros and cons of role-playing, and led numerous experiences on the relative accuracies of different prediction techniques. I shall succinctly sum up these findings, with the caveat that the context in which they were obtained was more academic than professional. Many of the 'experienced' security analysts I know

would be extremely reluctant to lend themselves to a role-playing act, which they would consider as histrionic and undignified. Role-playing is defined by Armstrong as 'a way of predicting the decisions by people engaged in conflicts' (Armstrong 2001: 13). Role-playing is considered the preferred method for predicting decisions in situations in which parties interact. It is especially useful when there are conflicts between them, involving large changes, and where little information exists about similar events in the past.

Studies by Green (2002: 321-344) have shown than role-playing was better at providing accuracy than other techniques. They also revealed that, besides providing more accurate forecasts, role-playing could enhance the understanding of a situation. For Armstrong (2001: 28), 'role-playing can provide participants with information about how they feel about other's actions and how others react to their actions'. Goldhamer & Speier (1959) reported that Germany used it in 1929 to plan their war strategy. Armstrong also suggested that decision-makers could use role-playing to test new strategies. And last, role-players can identify outcomes that experts did not consider. Role-playing has rather good press with the academic and forecasting community.

I am rather less favourably inclined towards this technique for several reasons: First, because of its absence of theoretical background, it is based entirely on an emotional evaluation of a situation and second because little research has been done on the procedures for conducting role-playing sessions. Armstrong aptly remarks that 'we do not know whether it is best to ask role players to act as you would act in this situation' or to 'act as you think the person you represent would act'. This is a major unknown. If the actors are acting, who writes the scenarios, who defines the cast, and who outlines the assumptions? It seems that, as it is conceived, role-playing focuses and relies on a kind of emotional dynamic, where emotive reactions to conflicts situation seem to have precedence over reflection. And, as for the Delphi technique, it integrates as part of 'the rules of engagement' the assumptions, biases and cultural prejudices of the stakeholders. It may therefore be an interesting exercise in social psychology, when conflicts between culturally comparable adversaries take place in the corporate world (struggles between management and trade unions in a European context, for example) but do not seem fit to help analysts working in far-off and culturally different places.

In summary, in spite of the good score realised by role-playing in comparative prediction techniques, I would not recommend the technique, simply because: (1) case studies and results were measured in an academic (or think tank) environment; (2) because role-playing lacks theoretical underpinnings, ignores complex determinisms, cultural differences, historical background and principles of decision-making. As Armstrong reflects:

> Role-playing has to date been more accurate than alternate procedures, in particular when compared with experts' opinions. However, research is needed to test the reliability and validity of the findings. (Armstrong 2001:8)

As previously mentioned, I have strong reservations of the validity of forecasts obtained in an academic context that privilege culturally constructed emotions over reflection and theoretical underpinnings. I think the conditions of experience are not realistic enough to satisfy the criteria of objectivity. Let us see now, what game theory, one of the other major analysis techniques, has to offer to the private security analyst.

> h.   Technique 5: Game theory

In Bueno de Mesquita' words: 'Game theory is a fancy label for a pretty simple idea: that people do what they believe is in their best interest!' (Bueno de Mesquita 2009: 3). Game theory sits on the opposite side on the decision-making axis. While role-playing favours the emotional side of decision-making, game theory postulates that the decision-maker will always act according to a cost-benefit analysis of a situation. In game theory, winning is everything and passes by a rational–only approach. Armstrong suspected that game theory would prove to be less accurate than role-playing. 'It would be interesting to compare the predictive abilities of role-playing and game-theory in conflict situations'(Armstrong 2001: 28). But what really is game theory?

> It is a formal, mathematical method of studying decision making in situations of conflict. It expresses its ideas in terms of how things should be, given certain assumptions; one of these is that decision makers will act rationally. Being mathematical, these ideas have been expressed in quantitative, numerate forms (known as pay-offs). (Evans 1998: 189)

Yet, there is more to game theory than this definition, and there are different variants. The two best-known expressions of the game theory are the *minimax* principle, a rule that

says that players will seek to maximise their gains or to minimise their losses, in a zero-sum situation, a simplistic vision of pure conflict. The non-zero sum variable (also known as mixed-motive game) considers outcomes where players can win and lose, and where co-operation can emerge as alternative to pure conflict. Born from the Cold War, one may wonder whether the theory was not trailing behind the reality of the two superpowers *Great Game*, rather than describing it, refining the model to reflect the reality of the different stages of the Cold War itself, justifying with hindsight the options made by the protagonists.

Game theory was heavily criticised in the 1960's for its lack of relevance to the real world. It was argued that in the field of mixed-motive game (another name for non-zero sum game), no unambiguous definition of rationality was given and that the playing out of the mixed motives game involved consideration of factors such as trust, which are not encountered in the zero-sum game (Rapoport 1964: Schelling 1960). Rapoport and Orwent (1962), in a comprehensive review of the use of experimental games to test game theory hypotheses, concluded that 'game theory is not descriptive and will not predict human behaviour, especially in games with imperfect information about the pay-off matrices' (Green 2002: 324). In short, game theory was discarded on the basis of its intellectual aloofness and lack of social empathy. As Barkin pointed out:

> In a perfect game-theory world, we could model the strategic interactions generated by a given foreign policy decision, and deduce what our adversary's best option is. But in our imperfect world, there is always the possibility that our adversary will think of a better option in response than we had thought. (Barkin 2002: 345)

Academics have also criticised it over its lack of predictive validity. Riesman, Kumar and Motwani (2001) reviewed all game theory articles published in the leading US OR/MS journals and found that, on average, less than one article per year addressed a real-world application. Armstrong (1997) stated firmly:

> I have reviewed the literature on the effectiveness of game theory for predictions and have been unable to find any evidence to directly support the belief that game theory would aid predictive ability. (Cited in Green 2002: 324)

Green's researches in conflict forecasting, based on six different types of conflicts, revealed that game theory experts, on average, did not perform better than chance in

forecasting decisions made during real-life conflicts. One may wonder what is therefore the predictive value of game theory in spite of enormous efforts devoted to research over six decades.

Has game theory therefore become another artefact of the Cold War intellectual paraphernalia? In a world where power was equated with the military arsenal of two superpowers, it may have demonstrated valid aptitudes for forecasting. In a multipolar world where forces are so plentiful, indistinguishable and unbalanced, it appears as obsolete.

Conclusion

This discussion shows the interest of academia in forecasting techniques in order to make them stick to reality. A lot of reflection and model-building had led to sophisticated techniques, tried and tested in academic context, but never used in the security corporate world.

Analysts confine themselves to judgemental methods, out of dignity, probably, but also out of practicality. Their work remains controlled and peer-reviewed which they consider sufficient guarantee against traditional biases. The question I asked was: should we consider these techniques as enhancing the skills of private security analysts and should we deplore that they are not more used in private consultancies? The answer to this question is a difficult one, but I am inclined to believe that these techniques should be rejected mainly for three reasons. Firstly, because they suffer from the same disease of obsolescence. Born in the specific context of the Cold War, measuring similar items (the famous Aron's *balance of forces*) in comparable cultural environments (the West), they assumed identical rules, values and behaviours. This must have been at the time and in this context an acceptable reasoning principle, but the world has changed, and these techniques have lost their relevance. The second reason to discard them is that they privilege emotions over reasoning. The logic used in their application is tainted with cultural and cognitive biases, leading to wishful thinking and other unacceptable biases. All of them carry aboard the cultural biases of their participants. These biases are not acknowledged as such, and are therefore never challenged or questioned. The last drawback of these techniques is that they are expressed in a theoretical vacuum. They are

based on the idea that collectable items (that establish the rules) speak for themselves. They do not. They are interpretations and as such they are not partial. A theoretically informed approach is necessary to make situations intelligible, and this approach must encompass the perspective of all stakeholders, to allow the corporate customer to make informed decisions.

These techniques can be useful when dealing with situations of cultural equivalence, when analysts and the target population are culturally comparable, but in culturally divergent environments they cannot provide analyst and customers with the right tools for decision-making.

Chapter 4

Security at the core of the theoretical perspective

1. Power and security in political analysis

Because I advocate that Realism should be the favoured theory used to lead security analysis, I must establish how power and security interrelate. As Buzan argued:

> Security is a broader idea than power, and it has the useful feature of incorporating much of the insight which derives from the analysis of power. (Buzan 2009: 159)

Security is also more varied in nature than power. Modern security studies have classified security under many different headings, all being of interest to the analyst, but some playing a greater part than others in the target-centric security equation. As Williams aptly remarks:

> The analyst should first define the meaning of security relevant to his study, and once this is done understand on whose security he is focusing. He should then define what counts as a security issue for this particular referent. (Williams 2013:8)

Security has become a wide scope domain, and there are many new understandings of security related domains, particularly since the end of the Cold War. If many areas of concern for the institutional and the private analysts overlap, some noticeably differ.

While governmental analysts concentrate on various aspects of diplomacy, intelligence, arms trade, terrorism, ethnic conflicts and cross-border crimes the private security analyst will have to focus on additional societal and cultural issues, (challenges to government's legitimacy, threats to political and economic stability, tribal organisation, ethnic allegiances and religious creeds, and the like) that can potentially impact the security of their customers' human assets deployed on the ground.

As a consequence, private security analysts, to satisfy the requirements of their corporate customer security needs, should adopt a more social approach than their institutional counterparts.

Ideally, private security analysts need to be a specialist of a region, but also a product of it. This is of course not always possible and analysts may have developed an attachment for a region that they discover relatively late in their career. They must then try to make up for lost time and work very hard to immerse themselves in the culture of the region. When asked about possible ways to improve her analytical skills, Bos, a female analyst for CRG, candidly replied:

> If I had the time to travel to my countries and have greater language skills, I could speak to more people on the ground and have a better understanding of what is really happening. I think an analyst has to be humble. Behind your computer there is some part of the reality that you can grasp and understand, but you are not a native. I am still a westerner and I cannot claim that I understand the way things are, and I would like to spend more time doing this. (Bos, interview: 1 June 2011)

Security covers a wide range of societal issues and private security analysts should pay particular attention to the way populations perceive and define themselves, check how these perceptions historically developed and how firmly they are entrenched. All these variables are all the more important when analysts narrow their scope of application down to the domestic level. At that level, information is, by nature, very scarce and has the capability to identify and observe the essential societal forces. By adopting such a perspective, the analyst put threats, such as an emanation of power, at the centre of their reflection about security. Power, the pillar of realist thinking, is still probably at the centre of international relations between states. Yet the evolving trend of the use of power shows that very little hard power, projected by small units, can have devastating effects on the security of a target. On 13th November 2015 in Paris, all it took to kill 130 people and wound another three hundred, was a small team of dedicated assailants, and a few AK47's.

Boyle and Haggerty aptly remark that:

> Co-ordinated sub-national groups have the will and the means to produce threats on a scale which was previously the exclusive purview of the nation-state. (Boyle 2009: 258)

Western populations, to which both the analyst and the corporate customer belong, are not ready to accept human losses in their midst. These losses break the social contract between the worker, the company and the government responsible for their protection.

Recent threat development makes the task of the security analyst far more complicated that the traditional comparison of the states' power or forces. Yet, the issue of security cannot be separated from the issue of power. The multiple attacks in Paris were a complex and well-orchestrated projection of power in a foreign enemy country, highlighting that 'threats have moved from the international level down to the regional and even urban scale'. (Graham 2004).

What seems to be preeminent in this new approach to international security, is the preponderant notion of amity/enmity and the prodigious potential effects of asymmetric attacks. Power at an international level is a measure of forces that can either be accepted, balanced or neutralised through alliances to ensure peace. New threats, based not only on power, but on a culturally consistent network of amity/enmity often sublimated by a religious discourse of exclusion presents a more complicated picture. Buzan insists on the importance of the issue of amity and enmity in the security analysis:

> By adding the dimension of amity/enmity to the picture, one gets a clearer sense of the relational pattern and character of insecurity than that provided by the raw abstraction of the balance of power view. (Buzan 2009: 159)

a. The new demands of corporate security

There was always an obvious link between power and security at an international level, but the end of the bipolar world resulted in an outbreak of forces spanning the whole spectrum of political units from the nation-state down to the regional and even domestic level. The consequence is that the measure of threat is not commensurate with that of national power anymore. The recent flourishing of *undesired security events* (such as kidnappings, beheadings, random attacks and assassinations) has had a major impact on how security is applied at a corporate level in MNCs and how they should evolve and adapt. It provides a reading grid entirely different from the traditional academic debates about power, threat and risk. Corporate security, as Caillaud observed (interview: 25th June 2013), is now about practicality and security effectiveness.

This new deal demands a different approach to security analysis, a recalibration of the security equation, meaning a re-evaluation of potential adversaries, a better understanding

of their motivation, intentions and capabilities, and a capacity to convey the magnitude of these threats to the people in charge. What needs to be brought to the attention of the corporate customer is that the ratio between the capability of the threats (as agents) and its potential effects in terms of consequences is being revolutionised. As a result, corporate security has become a nightmare and security practitioners must provide effective and immediately applicable advice.

Caillaud reminisced:

> When I joined the company in 2002, questions were more open, the problematic of the political and security evolution of interest to our customers more global, and we often produced 18-20 page long documents. Those days are gone. Today we have to answer pragmatic questions such as: do we need an escort? Should we use armoured vehicles? Which hotels do you recommend? It is concrete stuff! (Caillaud, interview: 25 June 2013)

This change of tack, perhaps more prominent in the French security industry, has for its origin the traumatic Karachi bombing of May 2002, where eleven French engineers were killed by a car bomb and its judicial aftermath, which saw the employer, the Direction des Constructions Navales, condemned to pay massive indemnities on the basis of insufficient security measures. It is also a consequence of the evolution of terrorist methods and strategies, of the capability of political groups to project small but devastating forces against western targets, and the extraordinary power of religion as a motivating factor. Political struggles between the haves and the have-nots seem to have mutated into confessional battles to death where, as a consequence, all rational avenues of negotiations have been closed. Religious manipulation has reinforced traditional lines of amity/enmity, that often duplicate ethnic or tribal divisions. The major consequence of this in terms of corporate security is that no host country can guarantee total protection to their western project partners for lack of trust in their own security apparatus.[1]

   b. Theoretical framework and context

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[1] Some countries are well aware of the danger. The kingdom of Bahrain, ruled by a Sunni dynasty, the Al-Khalifa since 1783, denies male members of their Shia community, who represent 75% of the population, access to the army and police forces. Only Sunni Bahrainis and foreign Sunni Muslims from Jordan, Pakistan and India can enlist.

It came to me as a real surprise when the first two professional security analysts I interviewed in 2011, the first one in London, the second one in Dubai, told me that they were not exploiting any of the IR theoretical frameworks they had been taught during their studies in their day-to-day work. Was it, as Guzzini (2007: 8) suggested, that 'IR theories appeared as either too abstract or too generic to be of much use for the analysis of world politics'?

Both had worked for reputable security consultancies, one for the British Ministry of Defence, the other for a world-leading risk company and both had graduated from traditional British universities, with distinction. Both shared a passion for international affairs and were security analysts serving corporate clients. Finally, both were adamant that Realism or idealism beliefs or principles were of no help in their day-to-day analysis work. During the interview in Dubai, and to my remark about Mearsheimer statement that 'the world is realist and will be so for some time to come', Bos, hinting towards the importance of culture in the analytical process, remarked:

> When I do my analysis, I try to stay away from the theories because they're all politically motivated or coloured if you want, and try really to think about the circumstances in a specific country's issues. I focus on context not theory. I will tell you one thing: when I (studied) learned at university, I did political science and I've learnt political theories. There is nothing there that I use in my everyday work, what I do in my everyday work is my experience of living in this part of the world because unlike a lot of analysts who study a specific region, I actually know what I know of this region because I (have) lived and worked here for a number of years and that's the experiences I rely on when I do my analysis, much more so than all the theories I've learnt at university. (Bos, interview: 1 June 2011)

The London analyst was no more encouraging. He was very familiar with the realist worldview, but did not believe it could provide any solid framework for analysis. On par with the Dubai analyst, he did not believe in Realism in any of its guises. Power, he said, is not always the major driver in international affairs.

> I think it is all about context. (…) Power is a very diverse concept in terms of how it relates to different environments. It does depend on the countries that I'm looking up, for example the extremely realist attitude towards power in Israel is the best example. Arabs are also a great example of power struggle as well in terms of Israel being a part of a conflict, but if you look at power in these countries it is actually going under transformation for the past 6 months. The idea of how 6 months to a year ago, Realism was the guiding principle in Egypt,

I would have answered yes, but is that the case now? A little bit less though, I don't know. (Hartwell, interview: 19 May 2011)

Ten analysts in Paris provided similar answers. Although the interviewees had a good understanding of the different streams of Realism, they found my questions surprising. One analyst posited 'there is no daily application of these schools of thought in our work' (Balencie, interview, 25 June 2013). I had read Wallace's argument about the relevance of IR theories, but disagreed with his concluding remark:

If a certain policy or event cannot be easily subsumed under some 'theories', if, worse, theorists do not agree on how to explain the event, sometimes not even about how to classify or name it (was the attack on the Twin Towers an incidence of war?), then, basically theory is useless, indeed at times damaging good political judgement, its teaching (is) to be discouraged. (Guzzini 2007: 21 citing Wallace 1996)

The second surprise I was to experience during these interviews was that all of the analysts, if they understood the tenets of Realism, seemed surprisingly uncomfortable with the notion of rational decision-making, based on power. For them, power was not the most important currency in international affairs. Trotignon offered: 'There are rational actions motivated by ideological convictions'. (Trotignon, interview: 24th June 2013). Be that as it may, French security analysts I met were convinced, like their British counterparts, that context, seen as a unique and all-encompassing perspective, explains everything. To assess a situation, they said, they take into account, the geostrategic vision of a situation, the history behind the tensions, the old historical friendships, elements that count in international relations. Yet Trotignon admitted that:

The context is a pirouette that allows you to put everything that can serve your interests. We, (the) French people, have been educated in the cult of Braudel and de Gaulle. There is therefore a convergence of a history perceived over a thousand years and the fact that, at some stage, someone will say: Enough! (Trotignon, 24 June 2013)

When asked about the importance of the decision-making process in their approach, the same analyst insisted that everything *that mattered* was taken into account: that actors were acting with a logic to stay in charge, that the influence of other actors was considered, etc.

We (the analysts) try to determine the factors, the initial context that triggered the crisis, and the consequences for the actor. It is our job to disentangle the various issues at stake, and to

push our analysis further, according to the event and the clients' expectations. (Trotignon, interview: 24th June 2013)

Yet, decoding security events through the lens of a theoretical framework is a prerequisite to any sort of analysis. As Guzzini points out:

Without concepts as meaningful data-containers, we cannot distinguish music (a meaningful fact) from sheer noise. Pure induction is not possible. In turn, such concepts cannot be divorced from theoretical or pre-theoretical assumptions. (Guzzini 2007: 22)

I argue that context, in spite of my interviewees' conviction, cannot be defined in a vacuum. There are reasons, though, to this intellectual confusion: context and theory share some similarities. Both exist to give sense to actions and facts, but theory precedes context and frames it, to make it a revealing tool of some reality.

Context is a perceived image, or reconstruction, based on unrecognised theoretical assumptions about what constitutes the situation. One of the rules of contextualisation in social science is that experiences, behaviour phenomena and problems can occur in more than one context, while the same theory should be able to explain different contexts.

Contexts are perspectives that shed light on actions and illuminate conducts, they cannot do so outside of any theoretical explanans. Contexts, like facts, do not speak for themselves: they need to be theorised. The decoding is done through a theoretical framework that interprets the mechanisms of perception. Privileging the context over the theory is therefore misleading, firstly because there are as many contexts as there are parties involved, and secondly because the only way to understand these contexts is by reading them through a prism, that of each party. Contexts can be antagonistic or share some areas of acceptance. When contexts overlap, there is room for negotiation, and it is the analyst job to measure this overlapping crescent. When they do not, the analyst should consider the situation as a zero-sum game.

In summary, context is a political construct. When theoretically informed, contexts can satisfactorily explain why adversaries will prefer certain courses of action over others. The analyst, by theorising these contexts, will provide the corporate security manager with relevant explanations to establish a strategy or course of action.

In the next section I will suggest that Realism is the IR theory that best fits situations of conflict and that it should represent the bedrock upon which theories used transversally will bring explanatory new perspectives.

2. Realism as a generic explanatory tool for the private security analyst

Realism was not devised to discuss domestic politics, but to explain relationships between nation-states. Yet, I argue that Realism principles can be downsized to the smallest possible political unit, without compromising its explanatory capability. I contend first that any human group sharing geographical constraints, a common history, shared beliefs, myths and cohesive narratives will aim for survival, no matter how small they are, and will do so by trying to increase their political power. I also maintain that, even at the lowest common denominator level, such as the clan or the tribe, the rationality of leaders remains a valid principle.

Four major criticisms come back regularly in IR literature. The first one is that Realism considers states as the sole actor in international politics. Realism's lack of methodological consistency comes a very close second. The imprecision on the key-terms or even key-concepts, (balance of power is one of them), is considered as lacking in seriousness. Finally, other critics have said that Realism failed to understand some developments of the post-war international arena, particularly the creation of the European Union that seemed to defy the realist paradigm of conflict-prone international society. In short, the incapacity of Realism to believe in moral progress, international co-operation, and constructive behaviour is considered as retrograde, narrow minded and inconsistent. Let us consider these in turn.

a. The limits of Realism as an explanatory tool

i. *Limit 1: States as sole actors on the world scene*

The first criticism refers to the fact that 'Realism does not distinguish between the first (the individual) and the second (the state) image in the assessment of why tragedy happens' (Rynning & Ringmose 2008: 22). Because of its assumption that state leadership will act rationally, there is an amalgam of the two levels which seems an

oversimplification of the complex issue of decision-making. Gilpin highlighted this point when he wrote that:

> There was a danger in practice in coming to think of the state as an actor in his own right, which has interests separate from those of its constituent members. (Gilpin 1987: 318)

This criticism ignores that seminal realists did not consider the agency factor as subordinate. Aron, in his memoirs, wrote that:

> To think about politics is to think about political agents, hence to analyse their decisions, their goals, their means (and), their mental universe. (Aron 1990: 58)

So, saying that 'states decide' is a simplistic interpretation of the Realist paradigm. Classical realists did believe that agents were prime actors in the decision-making process, but posited that the agent and the state, in times of crises, merged into a unique actor. When this unique voice does not reflect the perceived interests of the constituency, elements contest the leadership and act for its removal. Leadership and states are on par for a determined period of time, not forever. This is what Barkin calls *corporate power*. Realists speak of 'power of the state as a corporate actor, rather than the power of the individuals' (Barkin 2010: 20). When Hitler dismantled the restrictions imposed by the Versailles Treaty and reoccupied, militarily, the Rhineland, he benefited through this brazen action of an unprecedented support from the German people. Once the interests of the German *volk* and its leader depart, (by late 1942), plots appear to remove the incompetent leader. Realism, in its classical meaning, but also in its neo-realist form, is not a reductionist analysis of international decision-making, but the expression of an all-encompassing political image. The first and the second image, the man and the state, do not overlap but illustrate a synergy, (although temporary), between the leader and its people. When both images coincide, the leader has a comfortable leeway for action. When the overlap diminishes, so does popular support, and the leader's days are usually numbered.

ii.   *Limit 2: Poor definitions of key concepts and images*

Because Realism (in it classical acceptation) is essentially a philosophy, its adaptation to key concepts may have appeared imprecise to political scientists. Yet, Aron's definition of power was an interesting one. He pointed to the difficulty of pinning down the exact meaning of the word, particularly when expressed in English. His definition of power remains famous and testifies to a sound understanding of its different forms.

> The word power, in English, has a very broad (or vague) meaning since, depending on the case(s), it translates the three French words *pouvoir, puissance* and *force*. Power is first of all, in the broadest sense, the capacity to act, to produce, to destroy, to influence; then it's the capacity to command legally, (to come to power, to exercise power); it is also the capacity of a person, (individual or collective) to impose his will, his example, his ideas upon others; finally, it is the sum of material, moral, military, psychological means, (or one of the other of these means) possessed by the three capacities we have just enumerated. (Aron 2003: 595)

Because power remained at the centre of their vision, classical realists limited themselves to the domain of the political-military relations, where balance of power and of forces could be granted the status of core concepts.

As discussed earlier, Realism is firmly grounded in a vision of human nature, and as such privileges some fields of application. Many realist inspirational authors were soldiers cum philosophers (Thucydides, Clausewitz), others historians or political scientists, none were economists. Their approach was a humanistic approach, where man creates the political environment that will in turn shape the man. This environment stems from the intrinsic nature of man as a political animal, and the use of power on his environment.

Realism was criticised for its lack of interest in economic matters. Ashley remarks that:

> By neglecting economic processes and relations, which do not adapt well to BOP politics, they rendered Realism incapable of grasping political-economic dilemma, and limited Realism capacity to guide state practice amidst these dilemmas. (Ashley 1986: 22)

Realism grants political power to economy but it considers economy outside of its field of competence. As Waltz mentioned once, 'Realist theory by itself can handle some, but not all, of the problems that concern us' (Waltz 1986: 332). The accusations of poor concept definition, even if they are acceptable do not disqualify Realism from being a referent in terms of analysis. As Mearsheimer pointed out:

Our task (…) is to decide which theories best explain the past, and will most directly apply to the future: and then to employ these theories to explore the consequences of probable scenarios. (Mearsheimer 1990: 8-9).

iii.   Limit 3: Domestic politics as part of the realist paradigm.

If Realism is mainly a theory of international politics, the power developed within a state, the frictions and struggles inside the state, the repartition of force within these states, all elements that define the foreign policy of a state, do matter to realist thinkers.

In realist theory, what goes on within the state both determines the extent to which states are powerful and defines what their goals for that power are. (Barkin 2010: 22)

Domestic politics mattered to classical realists. Because they observed politics at an international level, and considered states as the lowest common denominator, does not mean that realist paradigms could not apply at a lower level of political unit.

I argue that, when part of the domestic society garners enough power (hard and soft) to claim their own legitimacy as an independent or autonomous political unit, then principles of Realism do apply. In areas where private security analysts operate, examples abound. In the Middle East, for example, Kurds of Iraq, Turkey and Syria have been pursuing a political objective of independence and unification for almost a century and it seems that, at least in Iraq, a favourable outcome is dawning. Libya is also exploding along clannish and tribal historical lines. Africa is the perfect experimentation ground of such a proposition.

iv.   Limit 4: An incapacity to predict changes

Modern Realism was unable to predict the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Mearsheimer and other contemporary realists have tried to downplay the importance of this failure, suggesting that this collapse was not challenging realist theory, and that it was too early to measure the consequences of this collapse. Ruggie (1998: 102) suggested that it was:

The discipline of international relations (and not only Realism) had failed to predict the collapse of the Soviet Empire, simply because a rupture of that kind was not part of any major body of theory. (Ruggie 1998: 102)

This attack on Realism for failing to anticipate the fall of Soviet system is an unfair attack in that very few, either in academia or in governmental circles, anticipated it. It took everybody by surprise, politicians, the intelligence community, the west, Russians themselves and even third world leaders. Liberal academics were no better at predicting than realists were. The 1990's events in Eastern Europe were a spontaneous, bottom-up unexpected upheaval, of which the Soviet *nomenklatura* surprisingly tolerated, for lack of any obvious solution. It was a popular uprising that found no tanks to crush it. With hindsight, it is easy to say that the winds of change had blown over the communist world. The reality is that the absence of reaction from the Soviet government and its satellites was completely unexpected. Was it again because existing theory could explain this upheaval that IR theories had to be dumped forthwith? Certainly not! After all, as Waltz remarked:

> A theory may help us to understand and explain phenomena and events, yet (it may) not be a useful instrument for prediction. Darwin's theory of evolution predicted nothing. (Waltz 1986: 335)

But how could a theory focus on change? Who can seriously claim to anticipate the unexpected? For Grabo:

> It is unfair to expect any analysis to forecast a coup, a revolution or any upheaval, which was (either) spontaneous or plotted by a few individuals in the greatest secrecy. (Grabo 2004: 94)

Security analysts are not to gamble about these low-probability-high-impact political scenarios, since to predict such events would amount to charlatanism, and it should not be expected from them. The fall of the Berlin Wall does not disqualify Realism, or any other IR theory for that matter, from being used as a bedrock from which analysis and reasonable prediction will be performed. It is easy to write with hindsight that:

> By limiting analysis to state actors, to nuclear strategy, to great powers and by assuming that states would choose the rational path, all of which are demanded by a Realism founded upon anarchy, the smaller, sub-national but significantly influential events that would result in all of Mearsheimer scenarios failing to materialise are effectively ignored. (Kissane 2006: 398)

It would have been more commanding had it been written ten years earlier. The failure to predict the collapse of Communist rule in Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union itself was not a Realist failure; it was one upheaval that took the world by surprise.

For some, it disqualifies all IR theories, but in my view, it should encourage IR theoreticians to engage the issue of international security forecasting with a newly focused dynamism.

b. The shift from power to security: Realism in need of rejuvenation

Many attacks on Realism have some relevance. Yet, I think that discussing them today is an out-of-date debate. Realism, as an all-encompassing theory, is the victim of semantic obsolescence. Power, as the unique currency of the nation-states exchanges, is not anymore a seducing concept, but security is.

Security has become the international affairs new currency. People and audiences respond well to security threats and accept its consequences, even when these consequences curtail individual liberties. Who would not want to feel safe in one's life? Power has had bad press, led to wars, destruction and injustice, while security is about protecting our communities, our children and our way of life.

This does not change the fact that the world remains realist in essence. Only the discourse has evolved. In a world perceived as increasingly unstable, where threats are varied, multiform and hardly controllable, states do not want hegemons anymore, they seek protectors.

If power is not a semantic reference anymore, balancing strategies remains at the core of regional security. As an example, the recent behaviour of GCC governments to cut diplomatic ties with Iran, while unanimously designating the Lebanese Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, demonstrated that balancing strategies has just changed their name and are now called security strategies. GCC leaders, petrified at the idea of an easing of US sanctions on Iran, have entered new alliances and sought out alternative protectors, (Syria and Russia in 2015, Abu Dhabi and France in 2009, Bahrain and the UK in 2015).

The fact that security toppled power in the minds of many security analysts is also due to the fact that power and security appear as very close concepts. Security is a result of the use of power, but it is an easier concept to grasp, and is not associated with great power's calculations and their scramble for influence. Analysts, though, must be aware that security is no less prone to intellectual manipulation than power. The Copenhagen school

of IR has clearly analysed the issue of the securitization and demonstrated the political aspect of it. McDonald defined securitization as:

> A process in which an actor defines a particular issue, dynamic or actor to be an 'existential threat' to a particular referent object. Security in this sense, is a site of negotiation between speakers and audiences, albeit conditioned significantly by the extent to which the speaker enjoys a position of authority within a particular group. (McDonald 2013: 72)

By replacing power with security as a reference paradigm, the analyst must bear in mind that when they speak about security, power still sits quietly in the background. Once the link between security and power is clearly established, it is necessary to think about the issue of power itself. What power are we talking about? How do the agents we are studying conceive power and its use? This is where Constructivism can come into play to give sense to power as a social construction that may differ from ours but can still be understood.

3. Constructivism as the natural complement to a reflexive Realism and a way to integrate cultural analysis

Constructivism is not a political theory, but a social approach that leave us with the capacity to apply its principles to any theory of international relations. The first added value of constructivism is that it brings a sociological perspective to traditional IR theories, emphasising the security analyst's quest for the *why* and the *how*. The second one highlighted by Dannreuther, is 'the prominence it accords to identity and culture' (Dannreuther 2007:41).

Although it precedes the end of the Cold War by a decade, its sociological concept of external reality, proved highly influential for security studies after the collapse of the bipolar world. What makes Constructivism a relevant paradigm, is that it can:

> …Treat ideas as structural factors, consider the dynamic relations between ideas and material forces as a consequence of how actors interpret their material reality, and is interested in how agents produce structures and how structures produce agents. (Barnett 2001: 263)

Their dynamic approach to international affairs, that refused to accept the primacy of material over ideational factors, opened up, for empirical analysis, the whole area of

social construction that Realism, Neo-Realism and neo-liberalism had somehow neglected.

    a. Towards a constructivist Realism

Barkin has explored, with authority, the possible bridges between Realism and constructivism and found three areas of convergence. They are: (1) a grounding in the logic of the social; (2) a recognition of historical contingency; and (3) a need for reflexivity. For Barkin, these three elements of classical Realism were lost in the second debate, and in the transition from classical to structural Realism. All three elements need to be restored to Realism if it is to remain a relevant theory.

> Constructivist and realist logic have definite compatibilities; constructivist and neo-realist logic, with the latter's sociality, a historicity and lack of reflexivity, have fewer. (Barkin 2010: 167)

Dannreuther, tackling the idea of security, argues that, constructivism builds on the explanatory capability of Realism:

> Constructivist theories have provided new and richer insights. Thus, securitization theory provides renewed understanding of how security issues are inter-subjectively constructed. (Dannreuther 2007: 211)

Constructivism can similarly offer a set of methodological tools, a way of studying not only international, but also, regional and domestic power and security relations, that is well developed in its own right, and that is both ontologically and epistemologically congenial to classical Realism. Constructivism also allows Realism to deal with the fact that ethics in international affairs may have different values in different places, paving the way towards a cultural approach to international security.

Yet, analysts should remember that Realism and Constructivism remain distinct entities. The focus of constructivism is not on power but on inter-subjectivity and its impact on international structure, while realists are the standard bearers of power as the essence of international politics. If there is room for a constructivist-Realism perspective, it must be accepted that it remains a realist-based sub theory. Constructivism does not focus on concepts like national interest or the balance of power, but can offer its contribution to their understanding. As Barkin offers:

The national interest, an idea that is central to much realist thinking, is a particular public interest, and as such provides a point of contact between Realism and constructivism. Being (in the) public interest, the national interest is a social construct, it is inter-subjective understandings that contribute content to the national interest, that give the state social purpose. (Barkin 2010: 67)

Part of constructivism can help a realist analyst in integrating social elements into the power equation:

Realism brings a focus to power politics and foreign policy, while constructivism concentrates on studying the co-constitution of structures and agents. (Barkin 2010: 7)

The constructivism paradigm opens a wider perspective for security analysts, by explaining why agents, (at any of the three levels of political analysis), will act as either power maximizers, enter alliances or adopt specific balancing strategies, and on which intellectual construction their attitude and decisions will be based. Constructivists see 'security' as a relationship historically conditioned by culture rather than by a goal, characteristically determined by the distribution of military capabilities. This is why constructivists 'favour methodologies that acknowledge contingency and context' (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 17).

b. Constructivism and regional (cultural) analysis

Snyder highlights this conceptual possible aggregation between constructivism and regional (cultural) analysis:

Following the end of the Cold War a new school of regional analysis adopted a constructivist/critical security approach and began to raise questions about how notions of regional identities were being advanced. The 'new regionalism' school differs from previous study of regions in that the earlier study focused on the 'functionalist' nature of integration that emerged in Western Europe in the 1950's and 1960's. Functionalism explains how regional structures operate, (…) but is unable to explain how regional orders are created in the first place. Nor do they address the important role that the development of regional identities plays in regionalism. (Snyder 2008: 230)

By doing so, constructivists provided a more practical approach to a situation of uncertainty and favoured a more target-centric approach to security. By understanding how regional identities and values were built, security analysts added value to the traditional approaches to analysis.

How could a constructivist-realist approach, provide the right lens to look for threats facing the MNCs in their far-off ventures? Would a combination of a constructivist approach and a classical realist philosophy show enough compatibility to sharpen the tools necessary to provide a more relevant analysis? Dannreuther remarked that:

> Beliefs, perceptions and intentions, often emanating from domestic social forces, play a central role in explaining the dynamics of power politics and conflict, which pushes defensive Realism, or as it is sometimes termed neo-classical Realism, more towards the constructivist end of the methodological spectrum. (Dannreuther 2007: 39)

Constructivism, with its interest in the construction of societal values and beliefs, would open the realist scope for new and more culturally orientated variables, which would take the analyst closer to a theoretically-informed understanding of 'what really happens' and its consequence of how a situation is likely to develop. A synthesis of constructivism and Realism would, in Barkin's words, bring:

> From classical Realism a focus on power politics and foreign policy and from constructivism, a focus on, and a methodology for studying, the co-constitution of structures and agents. (Barkin 2010: 7)

With the 'prominence it grants to identity and culture' (Dannreuther 2007: 41), Constructivism would add an analytical layer to the toolbox of the analyst. Constructivism, encompassing such concepts as pluralism defined as the 'understanding of differences', should augment the capacity of the analyst to grasp a reality in the field and reality of the other, based on the comprehension of beliefs and perceptions that differ from our western assumptions and provide a key to grasp the possible motivations and probable intentions. There is a strong compatibility between (classical) Realism and Constructivism.

Armed with this dual theoretical tool, the security analyst now needs to attempt to provide:

> A multi-dimensional and international perspective(s), taking into account the security views and perceptions of others, but without dispensing with his or her own set of values and cultural predispositions. (Dannreuther 2007: 7)

The analyst need not abandon their cultural baggage but should endeavour to filter the information collected through the constructivist-realist cultural theoretical sieve, envision

possible results, (conditions favourable to specific consequences), and convert it into a theoretically informed analysis understandable by the corporate customer.

The following description by Scheuer of the wishful thinking of Afghanistan's neighbours with regard to Afghanistan domestic policies is, in this sense, a good and relevant illustration:

> Pakistan wants a stable Islamist and Pashtun-dominated government in Kabul, one that hates India and aspires to Islamicise central Asia; this last to keep the Islamist Afghans focused northwards and not east towards Pakistan. Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Tajikistan want a state dominated by mildly Islamic Tajik and Uzbek Afghans, which will create a buffer in the country's northern tier to stem the flow of (the) Sunni militancy towards central Asia from southern Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf (…) Iran, as always, is aiming for an Afghan regime that protects the life and interests of the country's historically persecuted Shia minority, greatly reduce the production and export of heroin, and allows for the expansion of Iranian Shi'ism into central Asia. Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States still require what they required during the anti-Soviet jihad: a Sunni Islamic, Taliban-like regime that will block the expansion of Shi'ism through Afghanistan to central Asia and will instead spur the growth of Sunni militancy there. India (…) dreams of a near-to-secular government in Kabul, that is friendly to New Delhi, promotes the growth of neither Sunni nor Shi'a Islam in Afghanistan and central Asia and works with the Indian military and intelligence services to spy on and conduct subversion in Pakistan (…). (Scheuer 2004: 53)

This demonstration of central Asian realpolitik confirms the relevance of a culturally dependent constructivist-Realism as a major explanans and how it illuminates the 'context' issue. Context, as we have seen earlier, is what makes events intelligible. Theoretical framework, in turn, is what makes context meaningful. In our example above, a realist framework should give us the basic keys to understand regional and domestic politics. Scheuer, in this analysis, takes the constructivist approach as granted, and insists on the cultural importance of religion in the inter-regional balance. The context, as analysts would see it, is that Afghanistan's forthcoming government orientation will have an impact, in terms of security, for its neighbours. All regional stakeholders have different agendas and want to ensure a favourable inclination of the regional balance of power in their favour. However, these expectations look very much like zero-sum balance of power calculations. Each of these neighbours' objectives is valid; each intends to keep in check the threat of a resurgent Afghanistan, and hopes that the next leadership will tilt the balance of threats away and to their advantage. Each of these Foreign Policy objectives, based on fear and caution will probably be reinforced by a traditional set of myths, stories

and political propaganda expressed in political discourse, media and international tribunes. This collection of lesser contexts provides us with the greater context - I call it the objective picture - where all forces present are understood and measured. In other words, the analyst describes the possible resulting contexts of an uncertain politically assertive Afghanistan and its impact on the regional balance of power system. This is what analysts I interviewed would call the *context that matters*. Although they would forget that *seeing through our enemies' eyes*, to paraphrase Scheuer, does not mean applying our conceptual determinisms to another perception. One must understand why our adversary sees us the way they do, which values makes the appraisal of a shared situation so different from ours, and how they measure the options open to them. In this case, Scheuer's vision of Afghanistan's neighbours' foreign policy is one of an American defensive realist. In Scheuer's eyes, each regional power intends to influence the Afghan policy in order to mitigate threats at their borders. All analysts would probably agree with this analysis. Nevertheless, these explanations fall short of predicting what moves these neighbours will take, and how they will react to unforeseen or life-threatening threats. The context gives you divergent images of the game but fail to provide a recipe to anticipate probable decisions.

This approach, mixing Realism, Constructivism and cultural analysis, will become particularly relevant when analysts narrow their scope down to the particular threats in specific geographical areas, where the corporate customers' assets are mostly deployed. The regional and domestic political games will define the nature and the level of threats, and the reality of physical risks to be reasonably expected on the ground.

Yet, the explanatory power of Realism remains as relevant as ever. Security, in areas of conflict and crises is a consequence of the use of power. It is a projection of it and security uncertainty is always the result of a power issue. Yet, the focus on power only is too narrow to satisfy the current security demands of the business world. As Dannreuther argues:

> Beliefs, perceptions and intentions, often emanating from domestic social forces, play a central role in explaining the dynamics of power politics and conflict, which pushes defensive Realism, or as it is sometimes termed neo-classical Realism, more towards the constructivist end of the methodological spectrum. (Dannreuther 2007: 39)

Constructivism, with its interest in ideals and the construction of values, if correctly embedded in security will provide the most effective theoretical framework analysts can rely upon.

4. From Foreign Policy Analysis to cultural analysis

FPA is a theory of foreign policy, not of security. For Hudson, it is even:

> The most radically integrative enterprise of all the subfields of IR since it integrates a variety of information across level(s) of analysis and spanning disciplines of human knowledge. (Hudson 2007: 6)

This is a bold statement. A theory of foreign policy that embraces the whole of social sciences and can be applied to all levels of political analysis is indeed a theory to be considered with respect. While it would be interesting to see whether all these underpinning assumptions do constitute a theory, it is not our purpose here. What I want to discuss is whether this multi-dimensional approach helps to improve the analyst understanding of the web of threats that menaces the assets deployed abroad by their corporate customer.

At first glance, FPA appears to provide an interesting opening in terms of approach. It highlights the fact that analysis must expand its scope, both in terms of what group interests means, and in terms of individual determinisms. By putting the agent at the centre of the decision-making process, it offers a new palette of possibilities.

Interviews revealed that professional security analysts favour this approach. When discussing international politics, particularly in regions where Realism is traditionally used to assess situations (regions of intense power rivalries such as the Middle East or central Asia), analysts tend to reduce situations to power struggles between actors. They are inclined to give more leeway to policy makers of democratic states than to those belonging to more dictatorial entities. In a conversation with the author, Hartwell suggested that a man like Netanyahu possessed more of a decision-making capacity than Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The group of security analysts I met in Neuilly seemed to share this conviction. It does not mean that the structure, which they call context, is ignored. But in line with Hay's statement, they thought that decision makers, by their actions,

modify the structure, make the ideas evolve, to be in turn, influenced by the ideas and the new framework they contributed to create. For Hay:

> [Policy makers'] strategies are operationalized in action. Such actions yield effects, both intended and unintended. Since individuals are knowledgeable and reflective, they routinely monitor the consequences of their action. Strategic actions thus yield (1) direct effects upon the structured context within which it takes place and within which future action occur(s), producing a partial transformation of the structured context, though not necessarily as anticipated and (2) strategic learning on the part of the actor (s) involved, enhancing awareness of structures and the constraints / opportunities they impose, providing the basis from which subsequent strategy might be formulated and perhaps prove more successful. (Hay 2002: 133)

Professional analysts believe that the policy makers drive the decision-making process within the limitations of a structured context. This is how media report it, giving the feeling that great men run the world, while scholars and academics, in some kind of parallel dimension, restrict their individual prowess to a structural context that limits their possibilities of action.

Where does the truth stand? And how can FPA help in this debate? Prudence seems to be the order of the day, since, as Hudson remarks:

> Although an important topic of research in psychology, the implications of FPDM are only beginning to be explored. The reason invoked is that most decision-making theories in IR have either ignored emotion or seen it as an impediment to rational choice. (Hudson 2007: 45)

It is quite acceptable to advance that different cultures adhere to different sets of values, and that cultural perceptions affect outcomes. The difference in the application of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union and in China during the course of the 20th century should demonstrate satisfactorily that different cultures applying similar theories yield different results. Yet, very few studies have focussed on the cultural differences and their consequences in decision-making.

The realist tenet of the rationality of decision making has obscured four relevant issues: (1) that being rational in one culture may not be identical to being rational in another culture, (2) that faced with a situation, several choices, all rational in essence, could be made acceptable or unacceptable to people of an identical culture, (3) that agents, from

identical cultures do not systematically share identical determinisms and (4) that actors, often from personal character do differ in their approach to decision making.

a. The potential contribution of FPA to a reflexive and constructivist Realism

In the world of foreign policy, it is the one theory that will concentrate on the determinant element of decision that, by its sheer existence, will change the context of the situation and trigger reactions. Other political science theories talk about power, national interest, alliances, balancing attitudes, but FPA focuses on the agents and the consequences of their actions.

FPA is a multi-level, multi-disciplinary and multi-factorial theory. As Hudson remarks:

> Two of the hallmarks of FPA scholarship are that it views the explanation of foreign policy decision-making as multifactorial, with the desideratum of examining variables from more than one level of analysis (multilevel). Explanatory variables from all levels of analysis, from the most micro to the most macro, are of interest to the analyst to the extent that they affect the decision-making process. As a result, insights from many intellectual disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, organizational behaviour, anthropology, economics and so forth, will be useful for the foreign policy analyst in efforts to explain foreign policy decision-making, making multi / interdisciplinarity a third hallmark of FPA. (Hudson 2007: 6)

Another strength of FPA, is that it explains decision making in context. The objective of its research is 'the decision-maker as a human being, as part of group-think environment, large group, culture, domestic attributes and systemic influences' (Hudson 2007: 165). FPA, or so it claims, goes further than constructivism in that it posits that state actions are actions taken by agents in the name of states. Snyder points out that:

> By emphasizing decision making as a central-focus, we have provided a way of organising the determinants of action around those officials who act for the political society. Decision makers are viewed as operating in dual-aspect setting so that apparently unrelated internal and external factors become related in the action of the decision makers. (Snyder in Hudson 2002: 5)

Focusing on the decision maker allows a back-engineering process that will take into account (1) the context in which the decision maker has reached the apex of the domestic / political unit hierarchy; (2) the determinants that make them specific decision makers with a limited, but genuine agency; (3) the role decision makers are likely to play and the decisions they will be inclined to take in a situation based on the previous criteria. FPA

creates a new bridge between the world of ideas and its integration within the policymaking circles. In practical terms, FPA allows the analyst to see the world through the decision maker's eyes.

The importance of ideas in understanding the agents structure but also the decision-making process and context, should move the realist approach away from structuralism, and closer to reflexivity, emphasizing a Realism of prudence. More precisely, it suggests, in Hay's words:

> The need to consider the dominant paradigms and frames of reference through which actors come to understand the contexts in which they must act and, above all, the mechanisms and processes by which such paradigms emerge, become challenged and are ultimately replaced. (2002: 214)

A new Realism then? Rather a Realism returning to its classical roots, and hampering by this move the willingness to systematically predict outcomes.

b. Combining FPA and cultural analysis

FPA principles, although conceived for the international level, fit all levels of decision making, from the international to the domestic. FPA orientates the private security analyst towards research about relevant actors: declarations, actions, public appearances, political postures with regard to specific issues that may, one way or another, impact the security of a project. On the theoretical side, it fits our constructivist-Realism approach, while identifying cultural specificities in the decision-making process at different levels of analysis. It highlights the idea of power but it does more than that. It helps the analyst answer pertinent questions such as: how will ethnic groups, clans, provincial authorities and /or tribal leaders, perceive the MNC target-project? Which tensions will it create in societies and how could these tensions be exploited by each level of authority, from the head of state down to the tribal leader? The recent focus of FPA on group level decision-making brings considerable insight on how target populations and their leadership will react to situations, such as those created by the introduction of an MNC project into a region.

For the corporate customer, three equally important questions need to be answered. They are, in order of importance: (1) should we get involved in such project in such a place, what threats (threat-as-agents and threat-as-actions) are we likely to face? (2) What would be the reaction of our protector/sponsor (the host state and its security apparatus) should the local population react violently to our intrusion? (3) Should the host country decide to protect the project by military means, and what would be the consequences of the expected repression (or lack of it) on the viability of our project and the security of our personnel?

Finally, FPA's main handicap is its name. Since, for the analyst operating in the private sector, it is not foreign policy that needs to be decrypted, but rather regional and domestic politics and power struggles. I argue that FPA's principles can be applied to the lowest level of political unit without losing it relevance. Although the scale differs, tribal leaders or provincial decision makers apply the same principles of policy analysis as their bigger-scale counterparts. In conclusion, I maintain that principles of foreign policy analysis do apply at a subnational level and can be merged with cultural analysis when it comes to being a tool for the security analyst.

c. The conceptualisation of the other's culture

The concept of foreign policy analysis is linked to the conceptualisation of culture. Conceptualising culture is a perilous intellectual exercise, since it is always applied from the standpoint of external observers, themselves a product of a different culture. These observers cannot avoid cultural biases and prejudices. In spite of this, attempts have been made to conceptualise culture. Perhaps, because of its vague theoretical contours and multiple definitions, cultural analysis can respond positively to many theoretical paradigms. It can perfectly fit within a realist conceptual framework while satisfying constructivist requirements, since culture is, by definition, the result of a social construct. For the private security analyst, there is an interesting challenge in tackling this all-encompassing concept that would reinforce the explanatory power of constructivist-realist principles with that of country expertise. Yet, conceptualising culture is more complex than it looks. Academics differ in their appreciation of the concept. Hudson notes that:

> Some scholars emphasize culture as the organization of the meaning; there are others for whom cultures remains primarily value preferences and a third group of scholars conceptualises culture as templates of human strategy. (Hudson 2007: 108)

These definitions are valid at the three levels of analysis practiced by the private security analyst. They are not conflicting with their own cultural origin. As Dannreuther highlights:

> The security analyst should endeavour to provide (a) multi-dimensional and international perspectives, taking into account the security views and perceptions of others, but without dispensing with his (sic) own set of values and cultural predispositions. (Dannreuther 2007: 7)

Part of it is what Clark labels 'empathy, expressed as a tool of objectivity which allows analysts to check their biases'. (Clark 2007: 278). Analysts will not get rid of their determinisms but should envision and accept the other's cultural perspective. To achieve this, analysts must endeavour embracing as wide a range of the others culture, economy, military tradition and history, political history, self-image, recent past, which will help anticipate plausible reactions to suggested scenarios. The analyst must be embedded in the target-country's culture, past and ethos, but must also be aware of historical internal

tensions and conflicts. Although western analysts may never be able to *be the other*, and adopt a non-Eurocentric perspective, they should estimate, with the highest possible certainty, how the target population would react to particular stimuli.

As Hudson remarks:

> Cultural analysis is more than simply a thorough knowledge of a target country's past. Culture, as (a) dynamic and political instrument, provides policy relevance, but it does more than that. It suggests that cultural analysis and power politics analysis are not mutually exclusive theoretical rivals. A culture is important because of power politics… How power is conceived and employed is an element of culture. (Hudson 2007:121)

Cultural analysis is therefore inextricably associated to the use and history of power in the social structure. It is a tool that will tell the analyst what type of options will be favoured and which would be deemed culturally unacceptable. Cultural analysis is relevant at all level of analysis since any coherent political group will show particular cultural determinisms that are inextricably linked to, but may differ from, the immediately superior level of polity. For example, the cultural baggage of the Berber population in North Africa is inextricably linked to the cultural inheritance and idiosyncrasies of countries like Morocco or Algeria (Lugan, 2011, 2016). Yet, it differs and provides specific insights to the inquisitive security analyst. Berber population aspirations, frustrations and idiosyncrasies must be taken into account by the analyst, should a project be located in their midst.

Theorising culture appears therefore as an arduous task, fraught with intellectual dangers, biases and prejudices of which the analyst should be aware. Private security analysts must be conscious of their own cognitive limitations, and must therefore use empathy and moderation in their assessment of culturally loaded situations. They must be consciously reflexive in their approach.

Conclusion

I began this research about the theoretical framework that would act as a framework in a research method for security analysis on one major assumption: that Realism would the lead the private security analyst into a particular approach to improve their analytical skills. I first established the crucial bond between power and security, showing that they are linked, but that security offered a wider scope than power, particularly in a corporate

context. I acknowledged the fact that current analysts refute the necessity of expressing a security analysis through a theoretical explanans and hopefully demonstrated that this attitude was the result of cultural biases and prejudices. I then studied the limits of Realism as an explanatory tool and suggested that Realism be supported by a constructivist perspective to create a constructivist-Realism paradigm, better positioned to explain why Realism principles can adapt to culturally and historically different forms of society. I have shown that Constructivism and Realism presented interesting compatibilities, the former with its focus on power, the latter on the way power is constituted and its focus on agents who use it. I have then introduced the idea of cultural analysis, and proposed that power politics and cultural analysis should be seen as complementary paradigms.

These three theoretical elements are the backbone of a new approach to security analysis that I called Reflexive Cultural Realism. Is this a theory? A theory is sometimes defined as a system of ideas intended to explain something; especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained. (English Oxford Living Dictionaries). In that sense, Reflexive Cultural Realism is a theory. It explains politically driven security events in a particular social and cultural context. But it is not a theory of international relations. It is a theory of security that can be applied at all levels of political activity, from the global to the domestic, and as such will provide its user with an appropriate tool for security analysis.

From the analyst standpoint, it is a perspective, an approach that needs to be integrated into a method, to provide a rational and incremental explanation to observed security events in order to provide plausible scenarios to be acted upon.

This approach is well in line with the philosophy of seminal realists. Reflexive Cultural Realism aims to provide a theoretical and contextual background to private security analysts to provide pragmatic answers to the corporate decision maker. By using a target-centric approach to security, it aims to analyse threats and menaces at a practical level. When integrated into a method, developed later, in chapter 6 of this thesis, it will provide the corporate decision maker with the appropriate tools for decision for ensuring the security of human assets deployed abroad in degraded environments.

Chapter 5:

Reflexive Cultural Realism as a theoretical approach

In this chapter, after dismissing the fantasy of computerised political forecasting models, I will present and develop a theoretical approach to security forecasting that I have titled *Reflexive Cultural Realism*, which is a combination of selected theories of international relations studied in Chapter 4, applying at several layers of analysis and which purpose is to provide an as close to impartial as possible and all-inclusive vision of reality.

I will then discuss the selection of the elements that should enter the forecast, mainly driving forces, indicators and variables. These elements will be the components of the method described in detail in chapter 6.

I will then discuss the issue of scenarios, possible outcomes and plausible events to be acted upon, and discuss the different types of scenarios, not only their impact but also their limits and shortcomings.

1. The analyst and the computer: the myth of artificial intelligence

The extraordinary power of computers had captured the imagination of both institutional and private analysts for decades and probably always will because of their appearance of incontestable scientific truth. From the 1980's, when computers developed to a point where no limits seemed possible, some analysts became convinced that the capacity to store, calculate and synthesise data would provide an electronic, and therefore uncontroversial way, to prognosticate political (and therefore security) futures. Many attempts were made, particularly in American think tanks and military colleges where sophisticated systems of data collection and process were devised. All failed to produce an applicable model of prognostication and for simple reasons. Firstly, it seems illusory to enter into software any data of a magnitude comparable to those composing a human situation and all the possibilities of an agent's choice. The complexity of collecting human behaviours and measuring the innumerable reactions to unbeknown stimuli-in-advance

simply makes such a task unachievable. But can a few selected components provide an acceptable answer to a specific question? This is not a new issue and Gil & Phythian perfectly summarised it:

> Fundamental are the problem of overload and complexity. In order to deal with the former, all systems must select information as being relevant to the purpose for which it is required; but if the methodology for selection is misguided or outdated, then relevant information may be missed. The less an agency or analyst knows about a problem, the greater the danger of overload; on the other hand, experts in their fields may be the most likely to cling to long-standing interpretations in the face of anomalous information – the paradox of 'expertise'. (Gill & Phythian 2006: 84)

For Gaddis, the computerised model because of its complexity will not succeed in replacing traditional human reflection and the use of narratives.

> One might –at least as a thought experiment- construct a model capable of simulating human behaviour in all of its complexity, but it would have to be of such a complexity itself as to render it indistinguishable from the object being modelled (…) In practice, therefore, we 'model' human actions by falling back upon the only known simulative technique that successfully integrates the general and the specific, the regular and the irregular, the predictable, and the unpredictable: we construct narratives. But that is also what novelists and historians do. We come, therefore, full circle: the 'scientific' approach to the study of international relations appears to work no better, in forecasting the future, than do the old fashioned, methods it set out long ago to replace. (Gaddis 1993: 56)

By using narratives, the analyst moves away from a scientific approach. As Gaddis notes novelists and historians create narratives and so do political scientists and security analysts. It is with these limits in mind that the Reflexive Cultural Realism as a cultural, social and political approach to forecasting can now be presented and examined.

2. Reflexive Cultural Realism as an approach to security analysis

Reflexive Cultural Realism is at the same time a combined political theory, an intellectual approach and a viewing window to security analysis and forecast. By merging three theories of international relations into a combined perspective, it provides sufficient principles, concepts and notions to reveal the reality of any security situation, and this at the three major levels of analysis. The idea behind the combination of theories is to pool the tenets of each of these theories into an observation tool that I call the *reading grid*. The lens through which the analyst observes the reality comprises of three layers of

perspective, looking at different aspects of the reality and highlights aspects that require the analyst's attention.

Figure 2 below summarises this approach. The bottom line suggests that realist principles interpreted through a constructivist approach, complemented with tenets of cultural analysis would merge into a reading grid called Reflexive Cultural Realism that could be applied at the three levels of political analysis: global, regional and local to provide a major explanatory tool for security analysis.
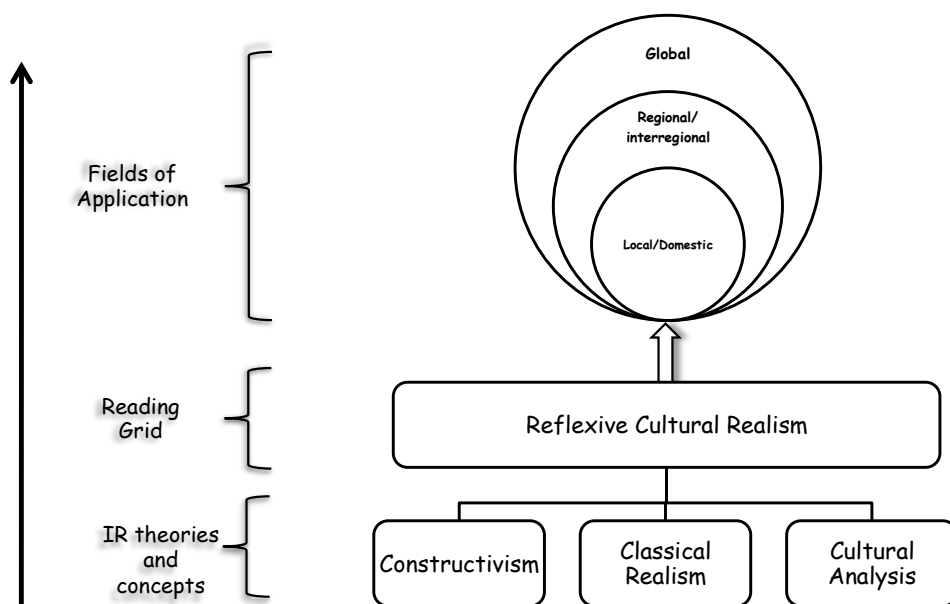
Figure 2: The intellectual approach to security analysis

Why have these specific theories of IR been chosen? Constructivism, because it explains how ideas and beliefs about power are understood and articulated by the actors of a situation, and how and why it became so; classical Realism, because it privileges human factors over the structural approach of neo-realists; and cultural analysis, because it focuses on 'the other', their values and beliefs, and how these values and beliefs will make them see a reality different from ours, and point towards preferred responses to specific stimuli.

These theories, to be effective, need to be used together because they are intrinsically indissociable. The way analysts will privilege one rather than the other will impact the

analysis, and analysts should beware of the danger of emphasizing too little or too much of the cultural aspect of things. Too little and the intrinsic value of culture is swallowed up by the overpowering tenets of Realism, and too much and the analyst runs the risk of using cultural analysis as the analysis of last resort, a danger underlined by Pye (1998) and cited in Hudson:

> Everything that cannot be explained by existing theories in FPA is ascribed to 'cultural differences'. Explanations of last resort, however (e.g. the Chinese act that way because this is the Chinese way), are virtually never explanations at all. (Hudson 2007: 104)

The theories composing Reflexive Cultural Realism are not rivals but should complement each other and the analyst should use their power of reflection to balance them according to the specifics of the target situation. Hudson warns us about this aspect of things and the risk of using Realism and cultural analysis independently from each other:

> The understanding of cultural analysis employed currently in the security studies subfield of IR is that culture is an approach that serves as an intellectual rival to the dominant paradigm of explanation – power politics. Cultural variables are seen as useful only insofar as they explain that which cannot be explained by actor-general power calculations…. The broad, general direction of culture within a society is noted in this style of analysis. Culture has become, if you will, a static residual in this view. (Hudson 2007: 120)

Cultural analysis is one of the lenses of the reading grid and its importance may vary according to several factors, the most important being the geographical distance between the observer's culture and the situation observed. So far, I have not devised any precise rule regarding their proportionality, although I suggest a rule of thumb in chapter 6, and I guess that until some thought has been given on this issue, analysts will have to use their intuitive judgment and make choices regarding which of these theories must be given preponderance to evaluate a situation.

Finally, the *reading grid* is unique in the sense that, although resting on the combined principles of three major theories of IR, it applies not only at an international level, but also at a regional and domestic level.

    a. Selecting the components of the method: Driving forces

Now that we have defined the theoretical backdrop of Reflexive Cultural Realism, it becomes crucial to discuss which components will be selected, measured and assessed. Components are those items of information that are significant enough to take the private security analyst from the description of a security target-situation to its political comprehension. Driving forces, are defined as 'these forces that move the plot of a scenario, that determines the story's outcome' (Schwartz 1998: 102), are the first to be considered.

> Without driving forces, there is no way to begin thinking about scenario. They are devices for honing your initial judgement, for helping you decide which factors will be significant and which factors will not. (Schwartz 1998: 102)

Driving forces are these dynamic factors that have brought the past into the present and will drive this present into the future. Yet, agreeing on what constitutes a driving force may prove challenging. Some analysts will add more value or influence to some forces over others depending on their theoretical perspective and natural inclinations (and biases). Some will give more value to the human factor, the social cohesion, the economic dynamics, the military power or the historical myths that bind communities together, to determine which forces were crucial in shaping the present and will project, the same values as determinants to envision possible futures. With regard to this thesis, the selection and measurement of forces must focus on political units and their attributes. What are these political units? How are they structured? What beliefs and values sustain their political objectives? What are their capabilities, their influence, and their motivation? How do their communities perceive them in terms of power?

In physics, a force is defined as 'an influence tending to change the motion of a body or produce motion or stress in a stationary body' (English Oxford living dictionaries). The value of such an influence is often calculated by multiplying the mass of this body by its acceleration. Using the analogy of physical sciences, we could argue that a force is a political influence, or the capability to influence politics even if it is not strong enough to change it. The evaluation of the strength of such force would be calculated by measuring its mass, it could be the number of its followers, the size of the tribes (Kurds, Turkmen for example), the power of alliances, and/or the position enjoyed by its supporters (for example the Kurds of Erbil sitting on very large oil reserves), multiplied by its

acceleration, translated in social terms, as its capacity to grow, to influence the existing system, to gather physical force and its capability to enter power-increasing alliances. Considering such forces would be considering its political capacity to act on the system at the level under consideration (global, regional or domestic).

Clark has given much thought to the idea of force analysis. Force analysis / synthesis is a technique that involves finding out 'what the existing forces are, how they are changing, in which direction, and how rapidly' (Clark 2007: 179). This technique belongs to the target-centric model and is usually applied by a subject matter expert who answers the following answers:

a. What forces have affected this entity (organization, situation, industry, technical area) over the past several years?
b. Which five or six forces had more impact than others?
c. What forces are expected to affect this entity over the next several years?
d. Which five or six forces are likely to have more impact than others?
e. What are the fundamental differences between the answers to question b and d?
f. What are the implications of these differences for the entity being analysed?
 (Clark 2007: 180)

The choice of what constitutes a force remains the analyst's choice. Since forces that impact a security situation abroad are politically motivated, they must therefore be theoretically approached and informed. Schwartz remarked that: 'driving forces often seem obvious to one person and hidden to another.' (Schwartz 1998: 103).

The choice of the significant forces, that is forces that reflect the power repartition seen from the Reflexive Cultural Realism reading grid, is the first issue to take into account in any analysis.

Then, the notion of impact, or weight of the selected force applied against the target-situation, is the second stage of the analysis. It is a challenging intellectual process because transforming this power of influence into arithmetic terms is almost impossible. The analyst could try to use is a scale similar to those used in industrial security, where analysts weigh the possibility of occurrence of an undesired event on a scale from 1 to 5[1],

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[1] 1-impossible; 2-unlikely; 3-possible; 4-probable; 5- certain.

and adapt this scale to a weighing[2]. Although it is really no more than a translation of feelings into figures; the exercise will gain more acceptance, and be more exploitable on a matrix presentation where forces will be assessed and arithmetically measured, allowing some scenarios to take precedence over others thanks to the possibility of the calculation of figures, something impossible when using words. This is fine as long as the analyst keeps in mind that these figures only reflect an intuitive value judgment.

In conclusion, the choice and pondering of forces applying to a target (in other words the strength and power of political units impacting the customer's project) is a subjective exercise. Because there is safety in numbers, I suggest that such evaluation be done collegially, to limit the potential biases of a single analyst. Armstrong encouraged collective work to fight prejudices and biases:

> Experts' opinion is, however, subject to biases and shortcomings. Much is known about the cause of these limitations and there are solutions to reduce their detrimental effects. Some solutions are simple and inexpensive, such as 'there is safety in numbers' and 'structure the collection and analysis of experts' opinions. (Armstrong 2001: 57)

During my interviews with analysts, this suggestion of collegial analysis was met with moderate enthusiasm. Practical difficulties were put forward. Often, one analyst is the only specialist of a region in the consultancy. As Blit remarked: 'it depends on (the) regions. In my region, I work on my own. Elsewhere it can be more collegial.' (Blit interview: 25 June 2013).

Bos, an analyst at CRG for the Middle East and Iran, said about collegial work:

> It depends on the nature of the work but everything that we write goes through at least to one editor, actually two editors, one that does all the editing and the other one does the proof-read version of the work and that ensures quality control from the language point of view, but also our editors have a very good understanding of the region we cover and they are also be able to pick-up on content problems and then, depending on the accuracy of the work, difficulty of work, how comfortable we feel with what we've covered, we of course always rely on our colleagues, we circulate our work, get feedback, we discuss problems ahead of time, there are often projects that we do collectively because it requires the expertise of more than one person and in which case we discuss issues, we review each other(s) work, peer reviewing is very important part of the work we do; we never send anything out without the piece we wrote having seen by someone else. (Bos, interview: 1 June 2011)

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[2] 1-negligible; 2-slightly significant; 3-significant; 4-very significant; 5-determinant.

Another issue is that to make any analysis intelligible, and quickly available, the number of forces should be limited and carefully chosen. Once these selected driving forces (the motivations, intents and capabilities of political units having the potential to impact the customer's project) have been acknowledged, analysts must keep in mind that, as in the world of hard sciences, forces applied to a target-situation will create reaction and friction, and that this phenomenon also applies to international security.

i.   Reaction and friction

These reactions, or frictions, take the form of resulting forces that may impact significantly the outcomes. These forces have been defined by Clark as: (1) *inertia*, or resistance to change, organisations naturally seek to establish and maintain a stable state; (2) *countervailing forces,* these will always oppose any significant force (it can be of asymmetric type); (3) c*ontamination*, this can dilute the effectiveness of organisational instruments of power (political, economic, social or technical); (4) *synergy*, summed up in the sentence 'the whole can be more than the sum of its parts because of interactions among the parts'; (5) *feedback,* as an adaptive force that can be beneficial or detrimental, the mechanism by which the target or system learns and changes. In other words, the feedback function determines the behaviour of the total system with time; and (6) *government regulatory forces*, which often constrain technical or social evolution with often unintended consequences (Clark 2007: 225-6).

The effect of these reaction-forces is to be considered, although their influence is still open to discussion.

ii.   Power and forces

The relationship between power and forces reminds us that our analyst is operating in a conceptual framework clearly noticeable by its realist influence. Circumstances will orientate the analyst in what they will consider as a priority. The Reflexive Cultural Realism reading-grid will examine the link between relevant units' political power and the forces they should be able to gather, on their own, or through alliances. Knowledge of the regional conditions, of the conceivable alliances of interest, of the repartition of forces as well as the nature and magnitude of countervailing forces the local leadership

can muster will orientate the study and determine a local balance of power and forces. A constructivist-realist approach will be the driving dynamic here, but the cultural aspect is important, particularly regarding the feasibility of alliances and should therefore not be minimised.

iii.   List of Indicators

From 1948 onwards, US intelligence agencies began to develop what they called 'lists of indicators', thinking about possible military actions that might be undertaken by the Soviet Union. (Grabo 2004: 25).

At a global level, indicators with a possible incidence to the customer's project can be found first in diplomacy and propaganda statements. The RCR approach embraces all levels of diplomatic activity, defined as an official dialogue between comparable types of political units. At the apex of the diplomatic game, the diplomatic exchanges of the UN, NATO and other supranational organisations are obvious indicators of the intentions of states and countries. The deciphering of exchanges, balancing strategies, political manoeuvres and alliances is a requirement for the international security analyst. This type of 'universal gatherings with general political purposes' (Watson 1982: 152), used as a showcase by heads of state to distil a mix of political platitudes, wishful thinking and blatant propaganda, needs constant deciphering and our analyst would be well advised to follow these events religiously since they often offer a mine of strategic information.

At that level of diplomatic exchanges, the recall of diplomats is largely a thing of the past; however, nostalgia for the Cold War ensures Russia and Great Britain still practice it to our greatest delight. But many smaller diplomatic events, less spectacular, can also yield interesting information when submitted to a theoretically informed observation. In today's world, ambassadors tend to react to events, rather than encouraging or preventing their occurrence as they did in the past, and diplomacy is, in that sense, more reactive than proactive, more technical than political, and has almost nothing left in terms of decisional power. Almost any head of state can meet allies or foes at very short notice. This was not the case until the Second World War. It was then that heads of state or government took up the role of ambassadors with decisional power during the heyday of

international war conferences[3], degrading a whole profession to the status of technical advisors. The result is that diplomacy has become:

> Less of a traditional art form with a premium on negotiating skills and 'winning' and more of a management process with actors seeking to reach agreement through a process of adjustment. (White 2001: 401)

Watson wrote: 'the diplomatic dialogue cannot be expected to be more honest than (the) statesmen who conduct it' (Watson 1982: 65). The case study of the kingdom of Bahrain, which has been facing a Shia uprising beginning since February 2011, presents an interesting example in this regard.

In early 2013, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of Bahrain, was embroiled in a permanent contestation that the kingdom security apparatus failed to control and that the media and NGO's exacerbated abroad, summoned all the western ambassadors resident in Manama, the capital, to ask them to convey what was 'really' happening in the island, i.e. that the population was fully supportive of the Bahraini leadership and that the unrest controlled from Tehran was posing an existential threat to the kingdom, intent on destroying the nation and its democratic (sic) institutions, threatening the regional balance of power, etc. Ambassadors residing in the kingdom, like all residents who witnessed this daily unrest, had a clear idea of what kind of dialogue was taking place in Bahrain, where a Shia majority struggled to obtain political powers on a par with their Sunni brethren, and knew that the Sunni leadership in place had no intention of relinquishing any power, counting on foreign mercenaries to maintain their grip on a power legitimated by only a quarter of the native population. What is of interest for our study is that the Bahraini leadership opted to use the diplomatic corps to influence the great powers, in spite of a reality on the ground known by all external observers. This could signify two things: first, that the Bahraini leadership thought that the diplomats were dupes of the existing situation, and this is not impossible; second, that they wanted to send the message that supporting the Khalifa leadership would help maintain a pro-

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[3] Casablanca in January 1943 with Roosevelt and Churchill; Tehran in November 1943 and Yalta in February 1944 with Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt in the leading roles and Potsdam in July 1945 with Stalin, Truman, Churchill (replaced by Atlee on 26th July after the victory of the Labour party in the 1945 general election).

western influence in the region. Alternatively, it also revealed an obvious malaise in the leadership due to their incapacity to quell the rebellion, still on-going in 2016.

This desire to seduce the diplomatic corps suggests that professional diplomats may not be as irrelevant as is often believed and that they still carry some kind of symbolic (and resonance) role. As I said earlier, high-end diplomacy is often a tribune for partisan rhetoric. Realist scholars have regularly attacked these international shows that they consider pointless, but it is probably without thinking about the mine of information they can provide to security analysts about a states' national objectives and posture, often intended to their domestic constituency. As most analysts are aware, posturing on the international scene often reflects domestic concerns.

Indicators aim to anticipate an adversary's course of action. It is of vital importance for the analyst to produce in their reports to corporate customers' plausible forecasts along with possible timelines. Saying that the target nation 'A' intends to increase its military power in the future means nothing if it is not accompanied by a value (quantitative, by 15%, or qualitative, by increasing the training of its Air Force pilots) and a timeline (within the next two years, before the next annual Pacific Manoeuvres in 2018). Forecasts should be like key performance indicators. They should provide for (1) a target; (2) an image; (3) a measure; and (4) a completion date. These indicators are crucial items of information.

Yet, analysts must be open-minded and very consistent in their choice of indicators. As Khalsa tells us:

> Psychological studies show that people tend to ignore evidence that does not support their biases and interpret ambiguous information as confirming their biases. When the mind is overwhelmed with information, that tendency is magnified as part of a simplification technique to reduce the information down to a manageable size. Furthermore, intuitive judgements suffer from serious random inconsistencies due to fatigue, boredom, and all the factors that make us human. Therefore, intuition can cause analysts to create a list of indicators that is not representative of all the evidence. (Khalsa 2004: 63)

Some indicators do not systematically provide us with the value a country leadership gives to one issue. Diplomatic activity, bombastic declarations (propaganda) are indicators of concerns, not necessarily of impeding action. For Grabo:

Political indications alone, in the absence of any significant military preparations, or without the capabilities to act - are not credible and we will always be correct in dismissing them. (Grabo 2004: 95)

Indeed, developments occur simultaneously when the intention is to be followed by action. Thundering declarations, passionate speeches, coupled with military escalation and new military alliances at regional, inter-regional and domestic level, all need to be collected, studied and decrypted. Our private security analyst would be well advised to link the coinciding presence of the verb and of the sword.

Should the project be installed in a volatile region, the existence of potential damaging forces needs to be analysed from a reflexive cultural realist perspective. The region chosen may not be a region of insurrection, and may not witness domestic fighting for political reconnaissance, but the existence of armed groups, militias, armed neighbours and government forces must be identified and acknowledged. The possible motivations of these groups to use the project to reinforce their political posture must be evaluated.

Indicators therefore are essential tools for our analysts. Yet, political indicators should be given precedence over the technical ones. In most instances, the *why* questions must get primacy over the *how* questions.

Often, analysts will be faced with indicators that do not fit the overall pattern, and they must fight the urge to discard them when they do not fall neatly into place in the jigsaw of the analysis. Indicators of divergence, from the climate of opinion, the historical pattern or present trends, do have significance. They should remind the analysts that the target-situation they are analysing is not a political monolith, but the fragile result of the application of centrifugal as well as centripetal political forces, and that the sudden appearance of divergent elements, new people, new tone, new discourse, surprising decisions, may mean that some forces are getting the upper-hand at a specific level, that the situation has been re-assessed by some stakeholders and/or that new strategies may be at work. These divergent indicators should be analysed on the basis of at least two basic tenets of realist thinking, First, that the leadership of any political entity will always try to increase their power (or at least its survival as a political force), and second that it will always act rationally to fulfil these goals. Divergent indicators can be the early warning of an internal struggle in a target-country or organisation leadership, leading to a change of tack, an opening to dialogue, or a new international policy with consequences

for the security of the project under scrutiny. Prudence must prevail though, as divergent indicators remain just that, divergent, and if these indicators must be collected, understood and analysed to offer alternative options to probable outcomes, they should not be given prevalence over the convergent ones, unless accompanied by a sudden military build-up or a rush for new alliances.

Indicators are divided into three main groups defining the traditional intention, motivation and capabilities, at both strategic and operational levels.

Indicators could be developed, after thorough brain storming at the consultancy, and should cover the following topics:

- Potential adversaries' *designation* indicators (How to understand *who* really are the adversaries to the project. Potential adversaries must be identified and then listed).

- Potential adversaries' *motivation* indicators (How to make sure that the analyst grasps the political motivation of the adversaries in regard of the project. What could make them want to harm the project, directly for what it represents; indirectly as a way to harm the authorities).

- Potential adversaries' *intentions* indicators, can be split into strategic and target specific indicators. Intentions here are the possible actions that the group could take based on the motivation's analysis. These indicators will be selected and populated with items selected with the Reflexive Cultural Realism approach in mind. The purpose of these intention indicators is to understand the limits of possible actions against the project, which actions would be deemed acceptable by the adversary and which ones can safely be excluded.

- Potential adversaries' *capability* indicators. Indicators must be seen in the light of the previous *intentions* indicators. Once the intentions are identified and acceptable modes of attack on the target considered, this indicator tells the analyst whether the adversary has the means to carry out these intentions. If using violence and material destruction is part of culturally acceptable behaviour. One needs to see what physical support there is to play that game (capability to

mobilise crowds and resources, weapons, explosives, network and link with organised and cross border crime, etc.).

- Target (or project) *vulnerability* indicators, can be split into strategic (project specific) indicators and tactical indicators (target specific). This vulnerability is measured against the *capability* indicators, and consists in considering forces and resources susceptible to be used to disrupt the project.

b. Selecting relevant variables

Variables are any items of information, constituents, features or factors that belong to the security equation of the project and *are susceptible to change*. They are the boundless possibilities that can affect the items of information the analyst chooses to include in the analysis of the target-situation. Changes in political equilibrium, forces, changes in resources, in weaponry, in tactics, in data that were used to build the analysis, and which, at any moment, impact the situation and modify the forecast. Because variables are by definition unstable, analyses and forecasts are dynamic but also volatile in nature. Analyses are produced based on factors and criteria which are constantly changing and any modification of any of these elements i.e., any changes in the constituting elements of this picture, will modify the present and the forecast to create an alternative future.

Selecting relevant variables ends up being the most crucial task of our analysts. Variables and forces are significant for as long as they help with monitoring the motivations, intentions and capabilities of the parties. A major difficulty for the analyst is to demarcate the respective field of data, variables, indicators and forces and integrate them into a coherent and hierarchic whole. On an abstract level, we may think that only data with a potential of satisfying an indicators' requirements should be considered as relevant. These indicators, once analysed, should provide a picture of an outcome serving a political objective. The reality of this objective can be exposed through the lens of our Reflexive Cultural Realism paradigm, since only this lens will give sense to the items of information selected and therefore drive the analysis. It is a two-way approach with a theoretical construct, the RCR, allowing the selection of relevant indicators in one way and variables enabling the identification of what is changing in the motivations, intentions and capabilities (the threat triangle) of the adversary in the other way. Critics will say with

some reason that there is ample room for bias in such approach, and I fully concur, but I do not believe there is any other avenue open to the analyst. It is illusory to think that the facts will speak for themselves, that reality is self-evident, that variables will be open to interpretation and will at the same time indicate what the future holds. It is by theorising the present that contexts can be accessed and that those variables that fit the contexts (and the purpose) will be chosen. The overarching idea is that the theoretical construct that makes the present intelligible will also define the related variables that will drive the forecasting exercise. I am very uncomfortable with declarations such as:

> Integrating counterfactuals into an intelligence collection plan is essential. A good analyst is always looking for any credible evidence that challenges their assumptions that would make existing forecast untrue or that would signal a change to a trend. (Exclusive Analysis 2010: 40)

This is a perilous statement, since considering incongruent data as possible changes in trend can hide the fact that challenges to the trend may also mean that initial assumptions were erroneous. I am of the opinion that the analyst should be extremely wary of any element challenging the chosen outcome and its variables, and study them very carefully, on the basis of Grabo's principles.

c. Scenarios as the traditional outcome of security analysis

Scenario is the final outcome of most security analyses and probably their most important element. Looking for plausible outcomes is what analysts do, consciously or not, when they analyse. As Blit, a French analyst specialising in East-Asia remarked: 'Our job is to propose scenarios rather than to envision the future. We offer several types of scenario'. (Blit interview: 25 June 2013). For Schwartz, a scenario is 'a tool for ordering one's perception about alternative future environments in which one's decision might be played out' (Schwartz 1998: 4).

As a security analyst, scenarios are the crowning element of their analysis. If one thing were to be part of an executive summary for the corporate customer, it should be scenarios. They are the plausible futures to be acted upon. I believe that, when it is possible; scenarios should avoid placing the favourable outcome on top of the list, but should rather highlight the risks a project is facing. Priority should be given to actionable

items, rather than delivering a satisfying desirable outcome, that prevents the customer from preparing for difficulties. As the French philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) once wrote: *'L'avenir ne se prévoit pas: il se prépare'*[4].

In summary, I argue that scenarios need to be built within a theoretical framework that allows a representation of the multiple perspectives of the actors involved in order to create a picture of the reality satisfying the criteria of impartiality.

i. Scenarios used in political forecasting

Political and security analysts have at their disposal four types of scenarios, which are:

> (1) Demonstration scenarios, (2) driving force scenarios, (3) system change scenarios, which move along a timeline and (4) slice of time scenarios, which are a snapshot: it dwells on the final scenes' (Clark 2007: 185)

Demonstration scenario

Pioneered by Herman Kahn, Harvey de Veerd and others at the Rand Corporation, the *demonstration scenario* is based on the following principle: the writer imagines a particular end state in the future and then describes a plausible path of events that could have led to that state. The *branch points* along the way identify decisive events that need to happen. They serve as indicators that a particular scenario is unfolding. The idea is to focus attention on the branch points rather than to the final outcome. As Kahn and Wiener (1967), of the Hudson Institute think-tank pointed out, this kind of scenario answers two questions:

- How might some hypothetical situation come about, step by step?
- What alternative exist at each step (branch point) for preventing, diverting or facilitating the process?

The major weakness of the demonstration scenario is that it depends on the idiosyncrasies and experiences of the scenario creators.

Driving force scenario

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[4] The future must not be predicted, but prepared. My translation.

The *driving force scenario* is most commonly used in government and business planning. It is an implementation of the force synthesis/analysis approach. It examines the major forces acting on the target, and determines how they are changing the situation, which new forces are expected to come into play and assess the resulting target over time. A flaw in driving force scenarios is that they assume that the forces, once specified are fixed. This assumption is made to simplify the problem, but 'it ignores potential events that would affect the strength of forces or introduce new ones' (Clark 2007: 185).

System change scenario

The *system change scenario* addresses the flaw in driving-force scenarios. It is designed to explore systematically, comprehensively and consistently the interrelationships and implications of a set of trend and event forecasts, including significant social, technological, economic, and political forces. Typically, there is no single event that restraints the system-change scenario, and there are no dominant driving forces. The system-change scenario depends on cross-impact analysis[5] to identify interactions among events or developments, and from those interactions to develop the outline of alternative futures. Clark reckons that: 'This is a very difficult scenario because it includes changing forces and their interrelationships' (Clark 2007:185).

Slice of time scenario

The *slice of time scenario* jumps to a future period in which a synthesis of explicit or assumed forces shapes the environment and then describes how those involved think, feel and behave in that environment. Orwell's *1984* is often cited as an example of the slice of time scenario. I personally do not think this scenario is a relevant tool in the PSA toolbox and will not consider it after this definition.

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[5] Cross-impact analysis is a methodology developed by Theodore Gordon and Olaf Helmer in 1966 to help determine how relationships between events would impact resulting events and reduce uncertainty in the future. Cross-impact analysis is based upon the premise that events and activities do not happen in a vacuum and other events and the surrounding environment can significantly influence the probability of certain events to occur.

In political and security forecasts, *demonstration* and *driving-force* scenarios are the most used. Both are an exercise in imagination that must be driven by theoretical guidelines. Clark highlights that scenario planning is fraught with intellectual loopholes, and suggests that proposing three scenarios (from the worst case to the favoured scenario) is the best formula to compensate for this lack of a genuine scientific approach:

> The assumptions on which the scenario is based must be made explicit because of its great potential for misuse. Numerous approaches can be taken in writing scenarios, ranging from a single person writing a description of a future situation to the use of an interactive computer model. A common technique is to create three scenarios: a most likely future (exploratory, driving-force) a 'worst case' future (normative, feared but possible driving force), and a best-case future (normative-desired and attainable, driving force). (Clark 2007: 186).

ii. Scenario building as narratives: Assumptions, traditional flaws and the importance of myths

There are several ways of creating scenarios. It is not our purpose to review them all in this thesis. Jouvenel remarked that methods for building scenarios, also numerous, are not rock-solid techniques:

> A plurality of methods exists to elaborate these scenarios, but none of them is perfectly robust. Their common vocation is merely to introduce a bit of rigour in an intellectual analysis calling for a much-diversified knowledge. (Jouvenel 2010: 43)

The accepted approach in scenario building is that of a narrative. The four main approaches described above are all proposing to describe an outcome as the result of an evolutionary story leading to a plausible outcome. Which assumptions and values analysts use to construct these scenarios is less clear. In this chapter, I argue that the assumptions and values on which scenarios are traditionally built reflect the values ingrained in those who write the scenario. It is an accepted notion that social values stem from political myths and that both become intertwined, in people's minds. The importance of constructive myths has been studied and acknowledged by several political theorists, such as MacIver (1947), Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) and Friedrich (1980). From their perspective, political myths embody the fundamental, *largely unconscious assumed political values of a society* (Little 2007:70). Regarding the scenario construction, both the analyst and the decision maker act and react according to the

mythical political (and socio-cultural) values embedded in their intellectual background. For Little:

> A political myth provides a perspective that dictates what we focus on when we look at the past and the future and from this specific point of reference it then becomes possible to justify the pragmatic steps that are currently being taken to maintain or transform the established political order. (Little 2007: 71)

Analysts who use scenarios as tools are, consciously or not, using the power of myths to describe the future, and do so in total honesty, since they share their values.

> Myths are 'the way things are', as people in a particular society believe them to be; and they are the models people refer to when they try to understand their world and its behaviour. Myths are the patterns – of behaviour, of belief, and of perception –which people have in common. Myths are not deliberately, or necessarily consciously, fictitious. (Robertson, in Schwartz 1998: 41)

And for the historian Stanford, 'myths are an account of the past that does popular service to the present' (Stanford 1994: 276).

Yet the power of myths and their importance as value-builder and social foundations are superbly ignored in traditional scenario building. This determinant cultural element in the construction of values and beliefs never appears as an element of scenario building. Scenario building, as a technique, is a recent western exercise, and tends to reflect modern western values. One of these western expectations in terms of analysis is that any analysis must reflect the reality. Yet, the reality is often complex and elusive. As Gill & Phythian aptly remark:

> There is some reality in the world, but the process of understanding it requires critical self-reflection on how we understand it. Thus theoretical and empirical work are inextricably linked. (Gill & Phythian 2006: 26)

To understand the other's myths is one way of doing it and a reflexive cultural realist approach, putting the concept of power into a cultural framework, would be able to depict an imagined reality that may count more than an objective one. As Stanford argues: 'the question of truth is hardly relevant, for myths appeal to the imagination rather than to the intellect' (Stanford 1994: 276).

Myths have functions:

> They serve to express the values of society, sustain authority, validate or authorise some customs, rituals and procedures. However, they also perform the psychological functions of releasing tension or repression – this is 'catharsis – and of wish-fulfilment or creating a desirable state of emotion. (Stanford 1994: 277)

Therefore, the analyst must study the myths of the target-society in great detail. Scenarios, like myths and tales, are not a simplification of the reality as is often thought, but an interpretation of it that makes the past, the present and therefore the future socially and culturally acceptable, understandable and prone to be acted upon. A reflexive cultural realist approach can be equally adapted to the *demonstration*, *driving-force* and *system change* scenarios.

ii. Scenario building challenges

Scenarios must first be split between descriptive and normative scenarios. Descriptive scenarios are exploratory in nature, and the analyst using such scenarios should try to adopt a neutral stance towards the future, attempting to be objective, scientific and impartial. Clark posits that scenario planners usually use three types of scenario approaches: (1) a most likely future (exploratory); (2) a worst-case future (normative, feared but possible driving force); and (3) a best-case future (normative, desired and attainable). These three proposals are different projections of the same values and items of information on a timeline, altered by the different responses from the unknown adversary (or hostile element) in the equation.

Without embracing a post-modernist (almost nihilist) approach to scenarios, we must be aware that scenarios, if they provide plausible images of political future, are not impartial tools for decision making. They are based on values and assumptions shared by most stakeholders on the one side, in our case, the western approach, and that outcomes written and decisions taken will reflect and serve these values. At the end of the day, the scenario will drive the decision maker towards the only course of action that will reinforce power and national (or corporate) interest and usually comforts the stakeholders, analysts and customers, in the prevalent climate of opinion. Traditional forecasts depicting the future of the relationship between the US and the Iranian Republic illustrates the point. One can look desperately, in western media, consultancy and think tank analyses for a forecast

whose outcome would show favourably the political behaviour of the Iranian state[6]. It seems that all scenarios accept as a dogma that the Iranian Republic is a dangerous and rogue country, intent on gaining nuclear military capability in order to subjugate the whole Middle East, and finally wipe Israel off the map[7]. Yet, none of these assertions resist the simplest analysis. A study of the military forces of the Islamic Republic illuminates the fact that Iran has neither the will nor the military capability to expect to counterbalance the US-GCC states alliance military extravagant superiority. Surrounded by adversaries, isolated from its traditional allies, Iran is probably looking for the best way to avoid the destiny of Iraq, Libya and Syria, who would have taken a less dramatic turn should they have been bestowed with nuclear deterrence. In very realist fashion, Iran tries to survive in an infinite ocean of enmity.

The demarcation line between scenario and manipulation is a very thin one, and when evaluating the value of scenario-based forecasts, this must be kept in mind. We have seen that there have been suggestions to keep bias under control and minimise inconsistency at different stages of the forecasting process[8]. But these principles, if they aim to control the excesses of bias, cannot change the fact that analysts on the basis of their inherent personal determinisms and cultural biases select the variables of the equation. Armstrong (1985) and Hogarth (1987) underline that judgemental forecasts are biased and often damage accuracy. These biases, which can be aptly transferred to scenarios, include

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[6] This was written in 2014 and it has proved completely wrong. Against all odds, the Iranian Republic seemed on the way to acceptance and normality, at least until the election of Donald Trump.

[7] On Tuesday, October 25th, 2005 at the Ministry of Interior conference hall in Tehran, newly elected Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered a speech at a program, reportedly attended by thousands, titled 'The World without Zionism' where he quoted Ayatollah Khomeini who had said about Israel: 'this regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time' (Nazila Fathi in the New York Times, 27 October 2005). This quote whose translation remains contested triggered international condemnation of the Iranian President and its regime and contributed to show Iran as a rogue and bellicose state.

[8] The seven principles concern the value of checklists, the importance of establishing agreed criteria for selecting forecast methods, retention and use of forecast records to obtain feedback, use of graphical rather than tabular data displays, the advantages of fitting lines trough graphical displays when making forecasts, the advisability of using multiple methods to assess uncertainly in forecasts, and the need to ensure that people assessing the chances of a plans' success are different from those who develop and implement it. (Harvey 2001: 59).

optimism, wishful thinking, lack of consistency and political manipulation (Sanders &
Ritzman 2001: 405).

iii.   How the RCR will reduce bias and improve the value of scenarios

One can think of a tension between the construction of scenario and the use of theories of
IR to build them. Bos, a CRG Middle East analyst, was particularly adamant that theories
were of no use to analysis:

> When I do my analysis, I try to stay away from the theories because they're all politically
> motivated or coloured if you want, and try really to think about the circumstances in a specific
> country issues, I focus on context, not theory. (Bos, interview: 1 June 2011)

This statement is widely shared by the analysts I have interviewed. Yet, if one can accept
that theories are politically tainted, they still remain the best way to decrypt situations. As
Gill and Phythian argue:

> Value free social science is impossible, because analysts are embedded within the socio-
> political context that is the subject of their study. Since analysts cannot claim 'value-freedom'
> for their findings, they must acknowledge what their value-assumptions are, in order that their
> arguments can be evaluated in that context. (Gill & Phythian 2006: 26)

This is valid for any political analysis. Scenarios, the way they are traditionally
constructed, cannot avoid being the sum of the analyst and the customer's biases and
prejudices and cannot claim objectivity. If objectivity is unattainable, impartiality
remains a desirable and valuable objective. But impartiality will not be expressed in a
theoretical vacuum. As Clark remarks:

> (Scenarios) are essentially specially constructed stories about the future, each one modelling
> a distinct, plausible outcome. The scenarios establish the boundaries of our uncertainty and
> the limits of plausible futures. (Clark 2007: 182)

The assumptions upon whose the scenarios were constructed must be made clear early in
the analysis, in order to avoid miscomprehension on the customer's side. As Gill and
Phythian aptly argue:

> Analysts cannot claim superiority for their view, simply because they occupy a privileged
> 'scientific' viewpoint from which to observe; but they can make their reasoning, methods and

sources transparent to others, so that the validity of their argument can be judged. (Gill & Phythian 2006: 26)

Because the analyst and their customer share the same biases, they are expected to share the same hopes, the same fears and the same prejudices. Therefore, it is to be expected that faced with the same security challenge, customer and analyst will meet in a somehow induced strategy. The plausible outcomes, stemming from the same culturally constructed imaginary, drafted in an unsurprising narrative, will suggest to decision makers the decision(s) they are already inclined to take. Customers will be reinforced in their own intuitive analysis, perhaps challenged on minor points, but not antagonised.

Most analysts, when they build up scenarios, adopt a normative approach. Because the idea behind the normative approach is to indicate a future that can be acted upon,

> The scenario planner describes a 'favored and attainable 'end state, such as a stable international political environment, and the sequence of events by which that could be achieved. An alternate normative approach is to define a 'feared but possible' end state (for example increasing international terrorism and governmental instability) and show the sequence of events that could lead to that end state. (Clark 2007:186)

This normative approach has a flip side to it. To be effective it needs to accept the idea that assumptions may not be unshakeable truths, and that there may be different truths, socially constructed and culturally defined:

> To operate in an uncertain world, people need to be able to re-perceive – to question their assumptions- about the way the world works, so that they could see the world more clearly. The purpose of scenarios is to help yourself change your view of reality – to match it up more closely with reality as it is, and reality as it is going to be. The end result is not an accurate picture of tomorrow but better decisions about the future: Scenarios are also about perceiving futures in the present. (Schwartz 1998: 36)

When the analysts I interviewed, unconsciously evaluated situations on the basis of unquestioned assumptions and were not satisfied with what they saw, they discarded theories and privileged 'the context', this alternative reality supposed to explain everything. Their approach was an intuitive quest for an explanatory model that takes into account the history, the geography, the sensitivities and the idiosyncrasies of the people observed. What these analysts missed is what the Reflexive Cultural Realism provides. A theoretical approach that, in a situation of power struggle, compares, evaluates and

incorporates the actors' (the others), assumptions on the basis of what they are, what they believe in, what they see as the reality and what they consider as acceptable means of action.

The RCR approach does not question the way scenarios are constructed. The techniques that academics, think tanks pundits and professional forecasters have created remain perfectly valid. What the Reflexive Cultural Realism challenges are the contents of these techniques, the way *a* reality is described as *the* reality, based on a single cultural perspective, that of the analyst. The RCR approach does not neglect the other's perspective and integrates their values, beliefs and myths into the perception of an alternative reality, that can and will be acted upon from the other's perspective, with actions that may seem incomprehensible, at first, for the western observer. The RCR approach is an attitude, an approach that puts culture at the core of political values and intends to show reality as a set of political and philosophical perceptions rather than indisputable certitudes. As Hudson highlights:

> To explain undertakings, one needs to look at the psycho-milieu of the individual or groups making the foreign policy decision. The psycho-milieu is the international and operational environment or context as it is perceived and interpreted by these decision makers. (Hudson 2007: 16)

 The RCR integrates this psycho-milieu at all levels of analysis from the global down to the local. The ignorance of the cultural factor in political security may seem at first strange. The importance of culture and its preponderance in politics should be well established. Yet, it is not. Hudson provides an interesting reason to this absence:

> This is not terribly surprising for several reasons. First, the study of how cultural differences affect behaviour has been, for the most part, the domain of social sciences other than International Relations (IR). Most scholarly work on culture is to be found in the journals of anthropology, sociology, social psychology, organizational behaviour, and other related disciplines. In part, the paucity of such literature in international relations stems from the now discredited work on national character from earlier this century. (Hudson 2007: 104)

Reflexive Cultural Realism by incorporating culture within a constructivist realist vision of power politics provides a unique and particular invaluable insight. The RCR approach posits that cultural analysis and power politics are not mutually exclusive. The elaboration of scenarios incorporating both a constructivist-realist and a cultural approach to power

politics should focus on illuminating how the other actors can perceive the reality and how these perceptions can impact their attitude towards the project. As Hudson writes:

> Rational choice and Realpolitik cannot exclude options on the basis of cultural impossibility - only an understanding of the other's culture can do that. At the same time, cultural analysis should be able to tell you what type of options will be favoured, ceteris paribus. Well-known and well-practiced options, preferably tied to the nation's heroic history, will be preferred over less well-known and less familiar options with traumatic track records-even if an objective cost-benefit analysis of the two options would suggest otherwise. (Hudson 2007: 121)

Conclusion

In this chapter, after having discarded the possibility of using artificial intelligence to prognosticate security events, on the basis of the complexity of human behaviour, I have explained what services the Reflexive Cultural Realism theoretical approach could provide to improve security analysis and forecast. I have argued that by using three IR theories, Constructivism, (classical) Realism and cultural analysis, whose relevance was discussed in the previous chapter, the analyst could design a reading grid capable of analysing, if not objectively, at least impartially, the different realities, and that this reading grid could be used equally successfully at a global, regional and domestic level. For Hay, the role of theory is 'the simplification of an external reality as a condition for the generation of predictive hypotheses' (Hay 2002: 39).

In that sense, Reflexive Cultural Realism qualifies as a theory, but I contend that it is also an intellectual approach, whose purpose is to enable the analyst to grasp the reality of a security situation without having to follow the dictate of more rigid theories of international relations. The RCR is therefore a theory, a perspective and an intellectual approach that, like the chemicals used in the dark room to develop photographs, reveals the behaviour of political units and agents in a security sensitive context. As Waltz wrote:

> Theory explains regularities of behavior and leads one to expect that the outcomes produced by interacting units will fall within specified ranges. The behavior of states and of statesmen, however, is indeterminate (Waltz 2010: 68)

Waltz concluding sentence confirms a tenet of foreign policy analysis that I acknowledge as one of the founding principles of Reflexive Cultural Realism:

> States are not agents because states are abstractions and thus have no agency. Only human beings can be true agents. (Hudson 2007: 6)

I accept that a reflexive cultural approach may not provide an accurate prediction of things to come, for the very reason that behaviour of agents are somehow unpredictable, but I argue that, as a theory and as an approach, it will offer a palette of possible developments based on specific power assumptions and cultural idiosyncrasies that will lead the private security analyst to a rational analysis of the situation they are confronted with. I argue that power, its conception and its projection drive such strategies of action and that the notion of culture and power are inextricably linked in a security analysis of any kind. The reflexive cultural realist approach, by emphasizing this relationship between culture in its widest sense and a constructivist-realist conception of power will provide trends into which scenarios will be framed.

I have then discussed the important components of the method: driving forces, indicators and relevant variables that drive the construction of scenarios, seen as the traditional outcome of security analysis.

I then described the traditional types of scenario used in political and security forecasting, and discussed the flaws, biases and shortcomings of traditional scenario building. I highlighted, through a reflection on myths, the importance of culture in formatting people's mind and preparing them to consider some actions as acceptable and others as undesirable. I then explained how the reflexive cultural realist approach would reduce biases and flaws and make scenarios effective tools for decision making, by opening the eyes of the decision maker towards the vision of the other. To be effective, Reflexive Cultural Realism must be used within the framework of a structured method. A security situation, to be understood by the analyst and the customer, must be logically analysed, rigorously constructed, and reflect an iterative reflection process as well as a sequential and all-encompassing method.

What makes Reflexive Cultural Realism a distinctive approach? At its origin is the author's conviction that no security analysis can be performed in a theoretical vacuum. Context, like facts, do not speak for themselves. Only theories can explain events and actions. Theories are needed and must be sought in existing theories of international relations because such theories can apply to every group that can distinguish itself from

others and defend their own interests, either to ensure their political survival or to gain more power within a defined geographical context.

The RCR qualifies as a theory in the sense that Keohane gives to it: 'Even a limited partial theory – with only a few propositions and a number of interpretive guides – can be useful' (Keohane 1986: 3). The Reflexive Cultural Realism is such a theory, resting on simple principles of a constructivist-Realism, emphasizing the cultural aspects of all things political and keeping permanently aware of the necessity to apply a reflexive approach to security analyses.

Now that we have established the validity of the theoretical scope (chapter 4) and defined the components that should be part of the analyst reflection (chapter 5) a process needs to be established.

In chapter 6, such a method will be discussed that will incorporate both the theoretical aspects of the RCR and the methodological sequences of an intellectual reasoning that must guide the analyst intellectual approach from the moment they receive their task to the moment they deliver their report.

Chapter 6

The RCR methodology: a 7-step approach

This thesis does not focus on existing analytical methods used in political or security risk analysis. Theory is conspicuously absent from these methods. The analysis of events is based on assumptions that reflect the doxa and do not satisfy the criteria of objectivity or impartiality that analysts should aim for. Although such methods are used daily by western security practitioners, they are not giving theory the place it deserves.

These methodologies consist mainly in questions to answer, tables to populate, boxes to tick, simple calculations to make and physical recommendations to mitigate risk and reduce it to what corporate customers call an ALARP[1] level. The well-structured documents produced through these methods aim to convince the corporate customer that comprehensive and solid work has been done. The seasoned private security practitioner will probably already be familiar with these methods, and may have used several of them. Such methods represent a way to organise personal reflection and a guideline to keep the analysis on a logical track. As a thread, it may suffice. After all, the security equation does not need to be overly complicated. Threat, attractiveness and vulnerability do determine security risk and I see no reason to challenge that well-established principle.

Yet, in this chapter I will approach the issue of security risk assessment from a different perspective and particularly the part that deals with the possible threats industrial or corporate projects face. The forecasting portion of the traditional security risk assessment method is de facto its weakest link. It is often limited to a compilation of past incidents having occurred in similar industries and comparable environments. The consequences of these incidents and a hindsight analysis suggest unoriginal recommendations devised to respond to similar incidents. Compilation and duplication do not equate with analysis.

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[1] 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'. Reasonably practicable involves weighing a risk against the time and money needed to control it.

And how could security risk be analysed without referring to some kind of political theoretical tool that would make various items of information become meaningful?

The 7-step method I suggest differs from existing ones because it links the issues of threats, risk and vulnerability to political conceptions of power, considers that threats are projections of power as a cultural construct, that its use is determined and framed by social values and beliefs, and that resulting threats (threats-as-agents and threats-as-actions) can only be envisioned within this cultural constructivist-realist framework I call Reflexive Cultural Realism.

As a general approach to security analysis, Reflexive Cultural Realism takes nothing for granted. If the method that follows is simple and easy to implement, its contents need to result from an intellectual reflection guided by theoretical principles. Questions and answers are seen through a theoretical prism that I call the reflexive cultural realist *reading grid.* This reading grid sees and analyses events through a perspective defined by a set of preferred theories that make questions and answers relevant and meaningful. To begin with, in practical terms, it assumes that customer's questions i.e., the security problem, should not be taken at face value, but analysed and reformulated. Corporate customers are not security professionals even when security concerns are placed high on their priority list. They may not be able to express security concerns through accepted security concepts and in the appropriate security jargon. I argue that it is crucial that the security analyst understand the concerns of the corporate customers and reformulate their anxieties to provide appropriate answers to very basic questions, which often reflect only part of the problem. The simple: 'Must we stay or should we consider leaving the country?' cited by Balencie, Head of the analyst department at Risk&Co, a seasoned analyst having worked in both the public and the private sector, (interview 25 June 2013) is a perfect illustration of the need for reformulation.

Reformulating the question by exposing underlying assumptions and possible biases, and giving them a meaning through a cultural and power orientated reading grid is the first task of the private security analyst. Threats (both threat-as-agent and threat-as-action) must be assessed with the help of a theoretical tool that puts power and culture at the epicentre of the analytical process and need not be utterly complicated.

1. Reflexive Cultural Realism approach: a 7-step method

The method aims to provide a guideline that the analyst will follow from the moment they receive their task until they deliver their report. This method resembles others used in industrial security that practitioners are familiar with[2]. What makes this method unique is that each step will be based on theory-orientated reflection instead of being based on facts or events. As a method, it is nothing more than a number of steps to be followed to keep the analysis process iterative, until its satisfactory conclusion.

The steps I propose to use to conduct the analysis are the following:

1. Reformulate the question (s) asked by the customer,
2. Establish the limits of the questions and define customer's real expectations,
3. Define forces, indicators, variables and any other data relevant to the problem posed
4. Develop one or several scenarios,
5. Evaluate the chances of such scenarios occurring,
6. Deliver the report,
7. Archive the report for further use or reconsideration.

Let us now examine each step of the method before moving towards some case studies that will illustrate both its validity and relevance.

a. Step 1: Reformulate the question asked by the customer

As Caillaud remarked, the questions asked by the corporate customer are often very practical in nature:

> Today, we need to be able to provide answers to simple and straightforward questions such as: Do we need an escort? Do we need armoured vehicles? Which hotels do you recommend? What are the risk in this region should we build a dam, or launch any sort of project? It is concrete stuff! (Caillaud, Interview: 25 June 2013)

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[2] American Petroleum Institute (2013); Biringer (2007), Vellani's Threat Analysis Group (2007), Somerson (2009), and Broder (2006), to name a few, compete with corporate security standards developed by MNCs to provide guidelines for corporate and industrial risk assessment specialists.

The practicality of the question does not mean that the analyst should take the customer's request at face value and answer them without questioning their underlying assumptions and hidden biases.

Customer's questions express concerns loaded with assumptions. These assumptions need to be identified, analysed and readjusted when incorrect. It is essential that the analyst grasp the nature and the magnitude of the customers' fears. What triggered their concern about the perceived degradation of the security environment of their project? Which undisclosed apprehension motivated this practical question about the possibility of using armoured vehicles? Reformulating the question using the RCR approach means identifying the operating forces impacting the project and how and why the corporate customer perceives some of the threats posed by these forces as existential: concerns may have been triggered by alarmist reports from deployed consultants, warning of a deterioration of the security situation at ground level. Although they may not be properly equipped to act as analysts, security consultants, with their military experience in conflict zones they have often developed an effective flair, and are particularly apt at reading social signs and their perceptions should be considered as important barometers by the analyst. For example, a question like: *'Should we use armoured vehicles for some of our employees?'* suggests that the customer considers attacks against the personnel as possible. Why this question? And why this question now? This is what the analyst must uncover. The underlying assumptions behind a simple and straightforward question must guide the analysts' reflection and help them to reformulate the customer's question.

A power analysis should initiate the thinking process. Are there local interest groups that may find reasons to harm the project? Whatever the nature of the project, plant relocation, a joint venture, a factory construction, a cross-country pipeline, an industrial venture, it is an expression of some political power enforced on a geographically and often socially deprived area. Measuring the consequences of this power projection, as well as the disruptive impact this project may have on the local social fabric seems an appropriate starting point for the analyst's reflection.

Then the level of resources used to secure this projection will assist the analyst to understand whether this project is welcomed or not in the area. The way the host country

proposes to physically secure the project usually provides an indication about its local popularity and the importance the government attaches to it. As an example, any oil project in Algeria in the Hassi Messaoud area, the oil & gas production area in the east of the country, is the object of a massive military deployment (military camps surround each and every industrial compound) that says clearly that the government considers the contracts between SONATRACH[3] and any foreign partner as sacrosanct and the preserve of the Algiers central government. It clearly indicates that there will be a zero-tolerance regarding threats. It also hints at the idea that the oil and gas joint ventures may not be perceived by the (local) population as benefiting them, leading to the idea that it could become, at some stage, a preferred target of terrorist groups roaming the Algerian desert. On the principle that the government will deploy forces they judge commensurate with the perceived threat to their joint ventures, the resources dedicated to the project will also give a clue about the magnitude of the threat as seen from the hosts government perspective.

b. Step 2. Establish the nature and limits of the questions as well as the expectations of the customer.

Once the concerns have been identified and the question reformulated to stimulate appropriate answers, the analyst can place their analysis in a broader context. The current trend in corporate security is to establish practical limits to the situation of insecurity, define the minimum level of security acceptable for their workforce, establish a threshold to their reasonable business involvement in a joint venture, and so on. The limits usually take the form of practical limits (unacceptable incidents) beyond which the customer can reasonably decide to disengage and apply an exit strategy.

Whatever the problem at hand, it will be circumscribed in limits and these limits must be clearly established in the report (traditionally, these are the risks incurred by their workforce, foreign and local and must conform to the company's risk appetite).

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[3] SONATRACH: Société Nationale pour la Recherche, la Production, le Transport, la Transformation, et la Commercialisation des Hydrocarbures.

i. Comprehend what the corporate customer really wants.

Understanding the clients concerns also means placing the project in its operating context. This context can be summed up in the security conditions of the operating environment. Security consultants are deployed in countries where the customers feel that their workforce is at risk. These are usually countries of ethnic tension, political struggles and endemic violence. The companies cited in this thesis work almost exclusively in what one could call *danger zones*. The workforce needs to be protected physically by security consultants, and the role of the analyst is to anticipate the possible evolution of the threats to measure the risk and suggest alternative outcomes to possible risk escalations (an evacuation plan is such a response). The field of application for both analysts and consultants is traditional areas of tension in the Middle East, South America and Asia. Returning to the customer's expectations experience of seasoned analysts (Caillaud, Balencie, and Trotignon 2013) reveal that they turn around very basic security issues. Balencie suggested that:

> The client has already taken the decision when we are contacted. What he is looking for is to ensure the security and safety of their expatriate personnel. Generally, the question is: Can we stay or should we think about leaving the country? (Balencie, interview: 25 June 2013)

Caillaud confirmed this pragmatist attitude in a conversation with the author:

> Actuality and the recent past push people to live in the *immediacy*. In the field of security, interlocutors are conscious that everything is volatile and try to see a clear way ahead, and now! And then, as analysts, we have another dimension, which consists in saying: there are heavy trends that you need to consider. We are in a functioning mode where the client wants an answer to an immediate concern. (Caillaud, wrap-up interview: 25 June 2013)

Decision makers may also expect more than a straight 'yes-or-no' answer to their immediate concerns, since, as Evans highlights: 'corporate decision makers want to understand the epistemology of risk' (2014: 107). Voloshin, a young and brilliant analyst for Russian affairs, sees this complementary role of the analyst as central:

> Private security analysts are there to give to the decision maker elements that they will not read in the press. The traditional profile of analysts (diplomatic experience[4], life in the target

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[4] During my interviews with analysts, I have noted that several young analysts are often sons or daughters of diplomats.

region, often mastering the language and equipped with an in-depth knowledge of the mentalities) makes them apt to grasp cultural issues often unknown by journalists. These analysts concentrate the open source information, and thanks to local sources and a specific personal knowledge, often provide the decision maker with a different perspective than the one they may find in the media. We write papers about different clans, about the relationship between members of government in their President's inner circle, things that are not always known. These are items of information that add value to our reports. (Voloshin, interview: 25 June 2013)

Defining the client's expectations may be disconcerting. When the customer asks: 'Should we use armoured vehicles?' there is more to it than taking an educated guess and reply: 'Yes, I think you should'. Although assertiveness is important in the way to convey the answer, serious research is needed to justify the reply.

Customers want a robust answer to situations of perceived insecurity and risk. At the same time, they want to understand the reasons behind their choice, in order to justify their decision to their hierarchy. In a MNC, command structures are complex and each decision maker reports to a higher grade, and must be able to rationalise a decision.

ii. *Placing the project in a timeline.*

The purpose of placing the project in a timeline is to understand both the history of the project and its possible development. Events appear at specific times for reasons and the reasons that triggered these events and actions must be analysed in terms of power variations in an often-overwhelming cultural context.

Yet, looking at the situation from a theoretical standpoint will mean different things if the project is still greenfield [5], if physical implementation has started, if personnel have been deployed and/or if threats are looming on the horizon. A project is usually going through three phases: (1) project, (2) construction & maintenance, and (3) operations. Each phase carries specific security concerns informed by different power issues. The construction phase, for example, is usually marred with theft of equipment, portable lights, vehicles, spare parts, powerful generators and expensive tools, that meet the demands of the local market and reinforce the criminal element. These threats, though, are not existential and

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[5] A greenfield project is a project still in its planning phase.

rarely politically driven. Political threats (such as murders, abduction and kidnapping by terrorists, activists and regional insurgents) run at low intensity during this stage. Later, criminals and armed militant groups may join forces to combine political acts of sabotage with theft of items for resale. Their activities can expand to the abduction of expatriates, by criminals reselling their human cargo to terrorist groups for political and economic blackmail, through ransom.

Having these stages in mind is important for the analyst since each one has its own particular security issues at strategic, tactical and operational levels. In order to provide solid answers to pragmatic questions, the analyst will use the RCR approach to determine which forces are acting on the project (detrimental forces, social, political and criminal), and which stage-related threats can be culturally expected, based on past experience or analogical reasoning.

Depending on the time given, the corporate customer can expect a quick assessment or a full situation report. Interviews have revealed that, in the private security sector, customers can spend more time reading reports than their institutional counterparts. Hartwell reminisces about his time at the British Ministry of Defence and how moving from the MoD to Jane's Publications presented him with more room for expression:

> In terms of word limits, in a previous life, I had to write 150 words assessments. In 150 words I had to write what happened and what I thought. And it's pretty tough! So, in actual fact, when I came to Jane's, I had more words to play with. So in a way, I was able to expand a little bit. (Hartwell, interview: 19 May 2011)

Balencie, who also honed his skills with the SGDN[6] and later transferred to the private security industry remarked:

> (In the private sector) we are lucky. Our readers can read one and a half page without (a) problem. We do not have the constraints and limitations of the MoD, for example. Some of our products can even be 4 to 5 pages long! (Balencie, interview: 25 June 2013)

iii. *Placing the project in a cultural environment*

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[6] Renamed in 2009 Le Secrétariat General de la Défense et de la Sécurité Nationale.

The cultural part of the RCR approach is of course particularly salient in this section. As Evans remarks:

> Current methods of terrorism risk assessment tend to focus on target vulnerability, terrorist resources and the consequences of a successful attack, but neglect the influence of terrorists' values and beliefs. (Evans 2012:182)

The Reflexive Cultural Realism approach is well equipped to address this shortcoming. Identifying the potential adversaries to an industrial project (this can be politically motivated agents, violent non-state actors, but also petty criminals), understanding their motivations, and how the project may be perceived as a threat to their lifestyle, their values and beliefs, how it can, from their perspective, announce an unbearable modification in the societal fabric, the loss of power and prestige for their leadership, unwanted involvement of the central government in the area, and security consequences of this involvement for people and families, all are crucial elements of reflection.

The RCR can illuminate these threat layers, provided the analyst can collect the appropriate information. Often, in distant places, information can be fragmentary, distorted and almost impossible to collect. If the consultancy has security consultants deployed in the target region, their local knowledge should be used extensively since the value of the analysis will depend in a great part from the quality of the information they receive.

Understanding, for example, if local people can turn into violent non-state actors (VNSA) depends on an intimate knowledge of the social fabric, of the legitimacy and actual power of the local leadership as well as their capacity to transform this power into potentially harmful threats against the project. As Littlewood highlights:

> The ability of any VNSA to invest substantial resources, acquire or attain the necessary technical expertise, conduct such activity under pressure and in a relatively safe haven, and imbue within the organisation a culture of learning relies upon multiple factors that cut across organisational structure and leadership, geography, time, availability of materials, the very culture of the actor and its constituents and the environment in which the VNSA operates. (Littlewood 2016: ii)

This approach must guide the analyst who, without local information, may find their task unsettling and counterproductive.

For the corporate customer, the questions that matter are the *what* (what could happen?) and the *when* (when will they strike?). Yet, these questions cannot be answered before the *who* and the *why* questions are properly addressed. And these questions can only be addressed when a theoretically informed approach which considers the issues of power and culture as primordial is developed. This is where the RCR approach will add value when compared to traditional risk assessment methodologies.

The question(s) asked by the customer and reformulated by the analyst, should reveal which threats are feared by the customer and the RCR approach should convincingly assert whether this fear is reasonable. How can this be achieved?

For many security agencies, the analysis starts with a collection of incidents that took place in the region for a determined period of time[7]. This exercise consists in compiling the security incidents of the last decade, and a study of how these incidents disrupted the activities of an industrial group, plant or network. It is based, essentially, on analogical reasoning. Many security analysts will consider past events as an acceptable way to predict future incidents. Often, the customer and local authorities, for lack of a better option, accept this 'reasoning by analogy' or sometimes even demand it[8]. The principle of extrapolation will suggest that similar attacks will occur in the future and security solutions are therefore devised to mitigate these 'expected' attacks.

From a RCR perspective, an extrapolation approach based on past occurrences should not form the basis for reflection. Previous incidents, if they constitute cultural indications, should not be given priority over a study of relevant political units, perceived interests and their potential means of action. A tactical study of previous incidents will certainly provide interesting information about preferred modus operandi and the level of violence to be expected, but this is not an objective of the analysis, rather a resultant. Posing the

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[7] A decade, for example, in API 780 methodology, a mandatory methodology for many industries in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries.

[8] SAUDI ARAMCO, the biggest oil company in the world, accepts only past incidents as a source of forecast.

who question means identifying the adversary, assessing their motivations, measuring their capabilities and anticipating their potential for damage.

Past incidents happened because groups of interests, in a circumstantial situation of power, wanted to harm projects deemed incompatible with the group's status, interests, values and beliefs, as our case studies will demonstrate. In simple terms, posing the *who* question is determining which groups of interests operating in the project area would have a political interest to harm such a venture. Any compilation of past attacks therefore needs to be reviewed through a RCR reading grid, which is a theoretically informed vision to read the dynamics of power and forces in that specific environment as well as their current relevance.

Although some grudges are structural, others are circumstantial. The list of adversaries should be streamlined and only current threats should be investigated. These groups must be named! Currently, in many analyses I read, the adversary is labelled as 'the terrorist' or 'the criminal element'. This is not satisfactory since these groups, although culturally comparable, differ in their nature, their motivations, their capabilities, their conception of power and the way they are prepared to use this power it to reach their objectives.

It is important that groups be named, and their values identified. If regional leaders and potential opponents share comparable political traits, they may promote different strategies to reach their political objectives and satisfy their followers. Desperate movements, for example, attract desperate people who may consider violence as their only means to alter the status quo or tilt the balance of power in their favour. Other groups will take the longer view and will follow a non-violent path, looking for in-depth action and seeking alliances, whilst accepting a compromise. And others will play a double-language game, claiming a certain path and acting differently behind the scenes. All these political units belong to the same cultural groups, share comparable values and beliefs, and yet use different strategies to reach their political objectives. The Reflexive Cultural Realism is well fitted to understand both the political perspective of these units and envision the plausible power strategies they would favour.

    c. Step 3. Define forces, indicators, variables and data relevant to the question at hand.

Forces are influences and dynamics that drive events toward an outcome. They can be social, technological, economic, political (and often military). Forces can act at several levels, from the international to the domestic, and will be studied by the analyst in that order. Forces can be negative (threats) and positive (support). Forces can be centrifugal or convergent, but also sometimes centripetal. When the forces are mainly convergent, the task of the analyst is facilitated, since all elements point towards a single direction. As Clark remarked:

> Dominant forces and trends tend to be convergent phenomena that allow the creation of a few most 'likely outcome' scenarios, with indicators that can tell which is more likely. (Clark 2007: 184)

When they are divergent, more reflection is needed. Integrating divergent information into the construction of the analysis is imperative. Divergent data regarding acting forces does not mean that the convergent model should be abandoned, and that dominant trends are no longer valid. But they may point towards new directions, an evolution of the context, suggesting that power may be shifting and that new strategies may be under construction. As an anonymous writer of the Exclusive Analysis brochure posits:

> What is instructive in such cases is often not the historical trend but the early indicators of a divergence from that trend or the conventional wisdom. The undetected plot that nearly reaches fruition may indicate new counter-intelligence capabilities among terrorists; the key influential jihadist strategic manual that criticizes a particular currently popular attack type may herald a tactical revolution, and the early evidence that a well-known, high-profile leader's threats do not have predictive power may signal a new operational leadership at odds their predecessors. (Exclusive Analysis 2010: 37)

Therefore, divergent data should not be discarded, but maintained at the periphery of the analyst's field of reflection, until confirmed or safely discarded.

> *i. From the 'global village' to the village: evaluating forces at different levels*

Analysts should start their reflection at the geographical periphery of the project and move towards its core. They should study the political and cultural significance of the project at international, regional and local levels.

Defining what the forces acting at international level are leads to some historical research in order to recreate the political environment that surrounded the original deal. This is the time where the project originated, where stakeholders, after an invitation from their respective governments met, where financial terms and conditions of the implementation were discussed and the contract between the parties signed.

Documented historical researches done through the RCR perspective will help understand which political and economic forces were at work then and how they shaped the success of the enterprise. The analyst should measure the politico-economic reasons behind the deal, and check whether these reasons are still perceived today as globally positive by the partners. The political impact of this deal must then be measured regionally, and the possible security threats it can generate must be researched in the press and other open-source intelligence.

An agreement between a government and a western industrial power may generate some regional jealousy both with local leadership and within communities. This jealously may in time build into resentment, which can, in turn, feed a growing local animosity and make communities receptive to adversarial propaganda. Analysts must look for items of information that either confirm or invalidate such intuitive proposition. They will do so by using with rigour the RCR reading grid while collecting both convergent and divergent open-source information, asking questions such as: how can this project be perceived by the different political entities that compose the regional and domestic complexes? What are the traditional amities and enmities of each particular group? Will communities feel neglected, humiliated or betrayed by their central government? These emotional questions reflect cultural self-perceptions and the wider the gap between the group's self-image and the perception of the way they are treated, the more fertile the ground for exploitation by adversaries.

When the project begins, the question of importance for the customer is: 'Are we going to face opposition locally and should we expect security troubles?'

Although reasons may be found at global or regional level, the local level is the one where antagonistic relationships will crystallise, while it is also the level where information might be the most difficult to acquire. If this level has not been studied prior to the project decision, and my experience is that it is seldom the case, it must be researched by the

analyst as soon as he joins the project. Understanding the forces acting at a domestic level are crucial since, as Graham highlighted:

> Co-ordinated sub-national groups have the will and the means to produce threats on a scale which was previously the exclusive purview of the nation state. Conceptions of security have become increasingly sub-national, regional and urban in scale. (Graham 2004 in Boyle 2009: 257)

Only theories that incorporate a constructivist-realist conception of power, and place it in a determinant cultural context, and the Reflexive Cultural Realism is one such theory, can drive the analyst towards an understanding of how power, forces and threats will transform the reality. Interviewed analysts were not convinced that a rational evaluation of forces would provide a full understanding of the security risks facing the customer. For Balencie: 'A Cartesian logic is not always applicable to regions where we operate' (Balencie, interview, 25 June 2013). I concede that it may sometimes appear so, but there is always logic in a political move, even at micro level and in culturally distant communities, and the task of the analyst is to grasp it.

Hobsbawm highlights the importance of groups operating sometimes at a sub-national level, preferably to more global stakeholders.

> For more than two centuries, until the 1970s, the rise of the modern state had been continuous, proceeding irrespective of ideology and political organisation, be it liberal, social democrat, communist or fascist. This is no longer the case. The trend is reversing. We have a rapidly globalising world economy based on transnational private firms that are doing their best to live outside the range of state law and taxes, which severely limits the ability of even big governments to control their national economies. (…) Thanks to this development and the flooding of the globe with small but highly effective weaponry during the Cold War, armed force is no longer monopolised by states and their agents. (Hobsbawm 2008: 37)

Local groups of interests defined by a geographical logic, a legitimate leadership, a shared culture, a political project and possible access to weaponry to defend or promote their worldview, have, with the end of the Cold War, broken the monopoly of violence previously enjoyed only by governments. In fragile political environments, where the customer usually operates, the legitimacy, the stability and security competence of the customer's partners should be examined. As Margolis argues:

The probability of state's falling into instability is a function of 'trends' (which measures broad patterns in authority resilience and legitimacy over time) and 'triggers' (events) likely to precipitate state instability. The lower a state authority, resilience, or legitimacy, the less potent a triggering event would have to be to disrupt stability. (Margolis 2012: 18)

The RCR approach allows defining and measuring forces in their cultural context and envisions their possible utilisation. Through this reading grid, the analyst recreates a theoretically informed reality that can be acted upon.

ii. Indicators

Khalsa calls indicators 'the building blocks of warning assessment' (Khalsa 2004: 8). Indicators are the elements that warn the analyst that some scenario is unfolding.

Khalsa divides indicators in three groups that reflect the three components of security risk: (1) adversary capability; (2) adversary intention; and (3) target vulnerability. Other risk methodologies suggest that only threat should be measured (intentions and capability), but Khalsa is correct to highlight that the vulnerability of the target is integral part of the security equation. Practitioners in corporate security already use this concept. The American Petroleum Institute (API) 780 methodology, to name only this one, measures the Security Risk as a product of Threat x Attractiveness x Vulnerability. The corporate customer wants to know the relevance of their set-up security position, and vulnerability is an important element of it. Grabo offers some interesting insight regarding indicators and suggest that they be weighed according to the relative social / cultural significance of the potential action considered, a remark compatible with a Reflexive Cultural Realism approach.

For the private security analyst, the idea behind the compilation of indicators is that a coherent political unit, intent upon damaging a project, would undertake indispensable steps to be able to perform the detrimental action. Identifying these tell-tales events will confirm a trend about how a situation is evolving and provide valuable indications to the analyst.

The analyst should therefore establish: (1) what perceived advantage would induce local leaders to choose to harm the project over supporting it; (2) which form these actions

could take, from the information collected; (3) create a list of indicators that 'need to happen for a specific scenario to unfold' (Khalsa 2004).

iii. *Variables and relevant data*

Variables, like relevant data, are items which modification (in number, value, expression, tone, character, etc.) will affect the unfolding of proposed scenarios. For example, the fact that the security force is deployed to protect oil & gas installations be reduced, without notice, in number or quality by the host country, is a variable that can be interpreted in different ways all of which have an impact on the security of the project. This action may mean things as diverse as, (1) the host government is cash-strapped and must engage the facilities forces in other more important projects; (2) the security situation on site is improving and does not require such levels of security protection; (3) the situation of the security forces in an irredentist area has become untenable; (4) or it may also be a sign from the government that their support for the project is waning. This variable, the amount of protection dedicated to the customer's project or joint venture, must be examined through a RCR lens to understand what are the political/cultural reasons that triggered this action by the host government. Only then can the security consequences of the change in the variable be evaluated.

The more international the project, the more important the monitoring of events surrounding the industry as a whole becomes. Examples of pipelines changing routes and partners in the last ten years are revealing, when observed through the RCR lens.

In summary, forces, indicators, variables and relevant data will be selected through a reflexive cultural realist perspective. The approach for each of these criteria will be normative in that each criterion will be observed as a social construct, in a particular cultural context.

d. Step 4. Establish from one to three scenarios

Establishing scenarios is the next logical step in the method. It allows imagining of what could be the impact and consequences of driving forces impacting the customer's project. Scenarios are about providing alternative futures to the customer to be acted upon.

From my interviews with security analysts, it appears that the provision of three scenarios, exploratory, normative and preferred outcomes, is a luxury they can rarely afford. As Balencie remarked:

> Because of (the) size (of the report) and time constraints, we cannot offer too wide or too complex a picture; we often offer one middle-range scenario, lying between plausible and probable. (Balencie, interview: 25 June 2013)

Currently, analysts do not feel it necessary to spend time on building scenarios. Yet, when customers are expecting an in-depth report, it is a thorough approach to security forecasting. Analysts should feel comfortable with scenario building and this skill needs to be routine, for all the advantages it brings to the comprehensive approach to a sensitive security situation. As Blit, a junior risk-country Asia analyst at Risk&Co remarks:

> Our task is more about suggesting scenarios than forecasting the future. We often offer several different scenarios. (Blit, interview: 25 June 2013)

The principle behind the scenarios is simple. It is the plausible effects of the application of driving forces to a target situation along a defined timeline:

> To describe the future, scenarios (...) describe how the driving forces might plausibly behave, based on how those forces have behaved in the past. The same set of driving forces might, of course, behave in a variety of different ways, according to different possible plots. Scenarios explore two or three of these alternatives, based on the plots (or combination of plots), which are (the) most worthwhile considering. (Schwartz 1998: 135)

Specialists agree that driving forces selection remains the major tool for creating scenarios.

> Driving forces are the elements that move the plot of a scenario, that determine the story's outcome... Without driving forces, there is no way to begin thinking about a scenario. They are a device for honing your initial judgement, for helping you decide which factors will be significant and which factors will not. (Schwartz 1998: 102)

Scenarios will result from the application of driving forces on a target situation. But forces, in physics as in politics, do create reactions and the analyst will have to measure the driving forces against 'countervailing forces that accompany all movement, (such as) inertia, contamination or synergy' (Clark 2007:226).

From the assessment of these forces, and depending on time constraints, the analyst will create one to three scenarios. Schwartz, a *futurist* who performed political forecasting for Shell, suggests the following organisation to create scenarios. He first recommends working with a team aware of the task at hand and that have come prepared to the first meeting. The purpose of the 'forecast' is to answer the following questions: (1) What are the driving forces? (2) What do you feel is uncertain? (3) What is inevitable? And, (4) how about this or that scenario? After the initial meeting, scenario-planners are given twelve hours of reflection, and the meeting resumes the next day, usually with improved results. This is all very well, but a close reading of Schwartz's' book reveals several issues: First, create a team dedicated to forecast in a Trans National Corporation such as Royal Dutch/Shell is far beyond the financial capabilities of any private security consultancy. Furthermore, the purpose of the Shell *futurist group* was to forecast an *unconditional* future, which is different from the work of the private security analyst focusing on *contingent* forecast.

Could the Shell futurist group approach be retained as a possible guideline? How do the four questions approach measure when compared with the RCR approach?

Beginning with the similarities, both approaches begin with the necessity to study driving forces and their magnitude, and the threats they can pose to industrial projects. After that, both approaches move away from each other. The Shell model is constructed around judgement calls from the members of the panel. Even if forces have been properly assessed, there does not seem to be a proper technique to build up scenarios. The second and third question: *what is inevitable* and *what is certain* seem very strange questions since they do not seem to consider the enormous potential for biases. Armstrong highlighted the dangers of judgmental forecasts, notably remarking that they were strongly influenced by biases such as favouring a desired outcome. (Armstrong 2001:7). Optimism bias, as it is sometimes referred to, is a flaw that was also noted by Evans. He advanced that:

> Optimism bias could be called a brute bias since it does not seem to be a by-product of any heuristic, but is a fundamental feature of our psychology, that operates regardless of the environment. (Evans 2012: 77)

The Shell model seems flawed in its conception, since it reflects essentially the cultural biases of their participants. Of course, all forecasting has an element of judgment. Forecasters use judgment in choosing models, in specifying parameters, in selecting historical data, in conducting uncertainly analyses, and in interpreting results (Armstrong 1985; Fischoff 1988, Morgan and Henrion 1990: 543). Yet, in that approach, in the absence of real analysis, judgement calls seem to be accepted in place of reflection, making the results of these exercises unreliable. Judgemental forecasts tend to be biased. For Sanders and Ritzman (2001: 405), 'These biases include optimism, wishful thinking, lack of consistency, and political manipulation.'

The cultural aspect of the evaluation, central to the RCR approach and conspicuously absent from the Shell model, is a safeguard to counterbalance erroneous value judgement, caused by the apparent uniformity of the group of experts in terms of origin, cultural background and shared values, that reflect the cultural and corporate climate of opinion.

This is where the RCR approach, with its emphasis on a constructivist approach about power and culture, would compensate these analytical shortcomings.

i. The place of power in scenario planning

The second issue of importance in scenario building is to understand the cultural nature of power in the target region. Are we dealing with a *relative power* mentality, or with a *zero-sum game* mind set? Generally speaking, in areas of tensions, where the political legitimacy and cultural equilibrium are often fragile, there seems to be a zero-sum game mentality, historically constructed, religiously strengthened and culturally maintained, that says that if you lose an ounce of power to your enemy, they will use it to harm you. Time changes and mentalities evolve, but in areas of tension, they do so at an excruciatingly slow pace. The analyst must be aware of this determinant element of analysis.

ii. Create an indicators list.

The RCR is well equipped to select indicators with a socio-cultural perspective and attribute some pre-eminence to some indicators over others. Grabo also suggests that people deployed on site, in our case the security manager in charge of the security of the

workforce, contributes to the preparation of the indicators list. The security people leaving their daily life in the target environment may have sound ideas about how some indicators will provide significant indications about the power struggles taking place among rivals and the impact of these struggles among communities. Little is known back at the head office in Paris or London. Grabo, talking about strategic warning at international level wrote:

> In compiling indicators lists, analysts will draw on three major sources of knowledge: logic or long-time historical precedent; specific knowledge of the military doctrines or practices of the states concerned; and the lessons learned from the behaviour of the state during a recent war or international crisis. (Grabo 2004: 26)

Grabo, in her statement, incorporates a constructivist-realist approach to the issue of power while incorporating cultural idiosyncrasies, giving a warning glimpse of the reflexive cultural realist theory I promote.

Grabo warns us about the relative value of indicators lists, but, supports their construction and maintenance. Her long experience with intelligence warning let her sadly admit that:

> Even if he (the analyst) helped prepare it (the indicators' list) in the first place, he will probably have very little need to consult it since he will know almost automatically that a given report does or does not fit some category on the indicator's list. Hopefully, he will from time to time consult his list, particularly if he begins to note a number of developments that could indicate an impending outbreak of conflict or some other crisis. If he does not expect too much, and remembers that at best he may hope to see only a fraction of the indicators on the list, he may find that the list is a useful guide to give him perspective on the present crisis. (Grabo 2004: 29)

An indicators' list has therefore only a relative value and is time-contingent. Elements that compose this list are variable in essence. The indicators' list will have to be adapted, modified and revised on a regular basis, focusing on power and cultural issues.

> e. Step 5. Evaluate the chances of each scenario occurring (risk intelligence).

The problem with scenario occurrence is that:

> The warning analyst usually does not have the luxury of time, of further collection and analysis, of deferring his judgement until all the evidence is in. (Grabo 2004: 41)

Similarly, the private security analyst will often be compelled to act fast, against their academic training and scientific instinct, and commit themselves to one report, one advice, trusting what Evans (2012) calls their 'risk intelligence'. As interviewed analysts deplored, when faced with an immediate crisis, they lack time to establish several well researched scenarios and tend to suggest only what they see as the most plausible immediate development. British and French analysts agreed that in such situations, their reports were assessed collegially, to make sure that they reflected the general feeling of the consultancy towards the event.

i.   Encouraging and developing risk intelligence

In his seminal book, *Risk Intelligence*, Evans defines risk intelligence as 'the ability to estimate probabilities accurately'. (Evans 2012: 23). His thought-provoking approach brings refreshing ideas to the issue of political analysis. Evans did not focus on the probability of occurrence of an event, but rather on the confidence the analyst puts into their analysis. For Evans, this trust in their own judgement should be delivered in figures rather than through words. His method for estimating this self-evaluation is as follows:

> First, take stock of what you know about the issue. Identify the bits of information you already possess that may have a bearing on the statement, no matter how indirectly.
> Next, for each of those bits of information, decide (a) whether it makes a statement more or less likely, and (b) by how much it affects the probability that you are correct.
> The outcome of this process should be a hunch or feeling, the strength of which varies according to your degree of belief. Finally, translate this feeling into a number that expresses that degree of certainty. (Evans 2012: 27)

This approach is unique because it does not focus on the probability of scenario occurrence but with the confidence analysts place in the scenario they propose, expressed in numerical (statistical) terms. This technique that will probably be met with fierce resistance by the security analyst community would solve, at least in part, several issues that plague the security forecasting business. First of all, it will clarify the issue of the interpretation of probabilities and denounce the illusion of communication. Verbal labels such as possible, probable and plausible, which are used regularly in security analysis reports, are subject to interpretation. Evans mentions a revealing example to illustrate that point.

In one experiment, an intelligence analyst was asked to substitute numerical probability estimates for the verbal qualifiers in one of his own earlier articles. The first statement was: 'The ceasefire is holding but could be broken within a week'. The analyst said he meant there was a 30 per cent chance the cease-fire would be broken within a week. Another analyst who had helped the analyst prepare the article said she thought there was about an 80 per cent chance the cease-fire would be broken. Yet, when working together on the report, both analysts had believed they were in agreement about what could happen. (Evans 2012: 117)

Although I have never put Evans' suggestion to the test, I intuitively feel that expressing opinions in figures would definitely improve and clarify analyses. As soon as analysts express confidence in a prediction as a probability, they commit to their analyses. They take responsibility. Such ground-breaking approach, when adopted, will change forever the way analysts approach the task. And it will make the RCR theory more pertinent, because the analyst would use the method to make their analysis more relevant and could express confidence in their reports.

f. Step 6. Deliver a report.

The form of the report and its contents are of utmost importance. The scope of the study will define the form and structure of the report. Trotignon posits that:

The wider the scope of the study, the more predictive the response must be, the more we must stay in the predictive. If the scope narrows down, then we must stick to the descriptive mode. Our readers are not very keen to listen to our great strategic reflections. They want to know what is happening and what might happen. (Trotignon, interview: 24 June 2013)

To this dimension, Caillaud adds a practical requirement:

The way reports are built is extremely important. This is a very strict exercise; the report must be coherent for the people in charge on site, the cadre in the headquarters in a tower in la Défense, and for the personal assistant who is preparing her boss' trip to the region. These three populations have usually no contact with each other and must, within the same report, find all the information they need. The analyst must therefore be very conscious of the form of the report. The more complicated the situation, the more accessible it must become, with a minimum of words, because we are constrained by the contingency of a very quick reading, two pages at most. The purpose is to be able to provide a report into which everybody should find the information they need. (Caillaud, interview: 25 June 2013)

The report explains, suggests, envisions a possible future, but does not pretend to provide solutions to the problem. Trotignon, summarising the general opinion of analysts interviewed, highlighted the fact that:

> In our analyses, we do not make any operational recommendations. We have colleagues, deployed on site with the company's personnel, who will participate or influence the strategic decision to be taken by the corporate customer. (Trotignon, Interview: 24 June 2013)

We have already noted that the form of the document and its conclusion are distinguishing features of security reports. Balencie, Trotignon (2013) and Hartwell (2011) all regretted that, when working for institutional departments, their analyses had to be limited to a few hundred words, making any theoretical rationalisation impossible to appear in the report. This state of affairs will probably not change, but it does not mean that this invisible framework developed upstream should be neglected or ignored. An analyst should be, at any moment, able to substantiate their choices by using a robust theoretically informed approach in their analyses.

g. Step 7. Store the analysis for archive and further use.

Once delivered and accepted by the customer, reports must be stored. Reasons for this are obvious: archiving the report offers the possibility to retrieve them when needed, and measure how accurate the analyses were. Is it current practice? Bos, an analyst with CRG [9] at the time, was adamant that it was:

> Absolutely, I think we have to, we do that, I do it, simply because we are lucky as well to have a system that, especially for our daily updates, it all goes to our website and it's a very easy search engine through our archives, it's very easy to go back to what we wrote 2 months ago, a year ago, 2 years ago. We always do it, I regularly go back to what I usually write and I think: Did that make any sense, was I right? What has changed since then? (Bos, Interview: 1 June 2011)

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[9] Control Risks Group, a security consultancy headquartered in London with many offices round the world.

French analysts were less flamboyant and admitted that they did not do it, mainly for lack of time and work pressure. All, though, agreed on the idea that reviewing old analyses would fight hindsight bias and improve analytical skills.

There are other operational justifications to archiving reports. Brulport suggested that:

> Clients usually have an expectation of M + 6 months. Yet, analysts often observe that what they had envisioned at M + 6 months develops three or four years later. This is why coming back to old analyses may be worthwhile. This is not interesting for the company, but for the analyst's work. It is interesting to see that we had anticipated some years in advance. (Brulport, interview: 25 June 2013)

Although most interviewed analysts admitted that monitoring old analyses and forecasts would benefit their analytical skills, all confessed that the immediacy and intensity of their work prevented them from looking backwards. It is a trend that needs to be reversed if analysts want to improve their risk intelligence. For Evans:

> Keeping track of what one learns, in a methodical way, turns out to be a crucial characteristic shared by all the group of people with high-risk intelligence. (Evans 2012: 25)

This could be extended to keeping tracks of all past analyses to understand where they were right, when assumptions were wrong and when and why theory selected data failed to deliver the proper picture.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined and analysed the way private security analysts should use the RCR approach to structure their thinking when confronted with a security situation they must decipher for their corporate customer. I proposed a 7-step approach which does not constitute a methodology *sensu stricto,* but rather an intellectual approach to the collection, organisation and interpretation of items of information defined, selected and studied through a theoretically informed framework. It provides a comprehensive collection of complex situations both in terms of geographical and cultural distance. I suggested an approach that provides elements of response to the *who* and the *why* questions regarding risk and threats in order to answer the *what* and *when* questions that are at the core of the corporate customer's concerns. In doing so I have demonstrated that Reflexive Cultural Realism is an appropriate tool to select the determinant vectors (forces, indicators and variables) that compose a situation.

I have now explained how theory would guide the stages of the method, and more particularly the important exercise of scenario planning and indicators' selection.

In the chapters 6 and 7, where two case studies will be developed, I will demonstrate in more detail how to implement this theoretically informed method.

Chapter 7

Developing the Reflexive Cultural Realism method in context:

Reflexive Case Study One: Saudi Arabia and the Sawari II project (2004)

The purpose of chapters 7 and 8 is to assess, through two case studies, the validity of the Reflexive Cultural Realism methodology developed in chapter 6. The fact that both belong to the same regional area may be seen as a weakness to the validation. I argue it is not. This unity of time (the mid-2000s), culture and place is a consequence of my professional experience as a security practitioner in the Persian Gulf area, and offers a solid background to provide first-hand experience in both cases and helps to evaluate the validity of the method.

Signed in 1994, the Sawari II project consisted of the sale of three stealth frigates of the Lafayette class to the Saudi navy. In 2004, a team of naval engineers, along with two security consultants, were deployed to Jeddah on the Red Sea by the *Direction des Chantiers Navals* to support the Saudi navy with the operation and maintenance of the frigates. A few months into the mission, the customer, worried by the worsening security situation in Saudi Arabia, requested an evacuation plan. Although the evacuation plan never materialised, I intend to demonstrate in this reflexive case study that a theoretically informed method and approach such as the Reflexive Cultural Realism would have been instrumental in defining a threshold from where an evacuation would have been initiated.

The second reflexive case study, the Dolphin Energy gas project, will be developed in chapter 8 and will examine the security concerns of a major international joint venture[1] with regard to the security of their pipeline network that crossed the Persian Gulf from Ras Laffan Industrial City in north-western Qatar to Taweelah in the emirate of Abu Dhabi and dispatched gas to major cities in the UAE and Oman.

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[1] Dolphin Energy is a joint venture between Mubadala Investments (Abu Dhabi) (51%), Total of France (24.5%) and Occidental Petroleum – aka Oxy- of the USA (24.5%).

First case study: The stealth frigates mission in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)

1. Background to the project:

The Sawari II contract was signed by the governments of France and Saudi Arabia in 1994 for the delivery of two F3000S frigates for the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, and in 1997 for a third frigate, equipped with the state-of-the-art *Arabel* multifunction radar and the *Aster* missile system similar to that already installed on the French navy's nuclear powered aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle[2]. The ships were built at DCN's Lorient shipyard. The first frigate, HMS Al Riyadh (812), was commissioned in July 2002. The second, HMS Makkah (814), was commissioned in April 2004. The third, HMS Al Dammam (816), was launched in September 2002 and delivered in January 2004.

a. My recruitment and my role

I was recruited in Paris in 2004 for the position of security manager of the Sawari II project, as part of a contract between the Direction des Constructions Navales (DCN-Lorient) and a private security company based in St. Cloud (France). This security company was already in charge of the security of the DCN employees working in the port city of Karachi (Pakistan), on the *Agosta* project[3]. The Saudi contract was the direct consequence of the Karachi attacks, which had shocked both the DCN management and their employees. Although the perpetrators behind this attack remain unknown to this day, the DCN had learned their lessons in Pakistan[4] and decided to show their

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[2] The Sawari II vessels are based on DCN's highly successful La Fayette-class stealth frigates. They have an overall length of 133 metres and a beam of 17 metres for a displacement of 4,500 tons. The Sawari II frigates feature highly automated combat management systems developed jointly by Thales and DCN and are based on the CMS developed for the French navy's La Fayette-class frigates. Their sophisticated combat systems include the SAAM naval self-defence system comprising the Arabel fire-control radar and *Aster 15* missiles.

[3] Three Agosta 90B's were ordered by the Pakistan navy in September 1994. The first, Khalid (S137), was built at DCN's Cherbourg yard and was commissioned in 1999. The second, Saad, assembled at Karachi naval dockyard, was launched in August 2002 and was commissioned in December 2003. The third, Hamza, was constructed and assembled in Karachi, launched in August 2006 and commissioned in September 2008.

[4] On January 16, 2004, the tribunal of Saint-Lô (France) ordered the DCN to pay 705,000 euros of compensation to the families of the workers killed in the Karachi bombing. The court said that the attack

commitment by subcontracting the security of their expatriate workforce in Saudi Arabia to a reputable security company. The deployment of two *security managers* in Karachi and two in Jeddah was considered by the DCN as a measure commensurate with the risk faced by the DCN deployed workforce. They believed that, should another attack occur, a judge would not be able to point towards a lack of preventive action to protect its engineers.

My main task was to ensure the day-to-day security of the workforce, (transport, travel, administrative tasks), organise security awareness briefings and write basic security procedures, traditional in this kind of context. Incidentally, I was also asked to write a confidential *letter of information* for the DCN senior management about the evolving political situation in KSA focusing on the possible consequences of King Fahd's expected demise, who, after having suffered a debilitating stroke in 1995, had transferred most of his regal duties to his half-brother Prince Abdullah, the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom since January 1996.

A few months into my tenure, the customer tasked my security company with preparing an evacuation plan, in case the worrying security situation should become untenable.

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate that an analyst, equipped with a theoretically informed method such as the one developed in chapter 6, would have been able to define a reasonable threshold beyond which the evacuation plan could have been activated with confidence.

b. The Reflexive Cultural Realism approach in context

As explained in the previous chapter, the reflexive cultural realist approach consists of a 7-step method comprising the following stages:

1. Reformulate the questions asked by the customer.
2. Establish the limits of the questions and define expectations.
3. Define forces, indicators, variables and data relevant to the question asked.
4. Establish a set of scenarios (from 1 to 3).

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had been made possible because of *'an inexcusable mistake by the employer, namely to have minimised the risks faced by the employees'* (L'Obs, online edition, 16 January 2004).

5. Evaluate the chances of the scenario occurring.

6. Deliver the report.

7. Archive the report for further use.

2. Evacuation plan traditional challenges.

An evacuation plan is mainly an administrative document. The idea behind the plan is to provide an orderly method of evacuating part of all of an expatriate workforce, while trying to keep operations running at a slow pace for as long as the security situation requires, until a return to full operations is practicable.

> The mission of the evacuation plan is to identify the need to demobilise personnel or assets in a timely manner and to safely extract them from operational areas to prearranged safe locations(s), in the event of deterioration of the risk environment. (Blyth 2008: 295)

The creation of an evacuation plan is rather well documented in corporate and industrial security literature and its principles are well known. The evacuation plan itself is a long list of *to-do* things which, when applied with method and common sense, leads to a safe evacuation of personnel.

The evacuation plan is a part of any company procedure when deploying employees abroad. It is sometimes known as the Emergency and Crisis security plan. It is often the main reason why the corporate customer contracts the services of a security consultancy. It is a direct consequence of the one question at the centre of their preoccupations: 'Can we stay? Should we leave the country?' (Balencie, interview: 25 June 2013).

Among the traditional issues of the evacuation plan, the key question is 'when should we leave?' This is the crux of the matter and there is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question.

The reasons for deciding to evacuate can be diverse, from a perceived degradation of the environment, uncontrolled social unrest, terrorist attacks, criminal acts directed at the project personnel or equipment, fatwas pronounced against the project or the workforce's country of origin, even natural disasters, to name the most frequent. Yet, the necessity to establish a threshold, or trigger point to launch the exercise is often overlooked and stakeholders often adopt a 'we will see when we get there' attitude. As Strachan-Morris,

a Lecturer in Intelligence and Security at the University of Leicester who formerly worked in the private security sector remarked:

> I have found that evacuation trigger plans are more often used to trigger the decision-making process itself rather than an actual evacuation. Clients, and even executives within the security company, often make the decision whether or not to leave based upon other factors, usually under pressure from 'head office'. I have seen companies stay when the triggers say they should leave and leave when panicked by a single event Oddly enough this becomes a 'successful evacuation exercise' when they return. (Strachan-Morris, email: 28 September 2015)

More often than not, analysts are not consulted on what is perceived as an operational decision. When I asked, in June 2016, some analysts at Risk&Co to share their experience about evacuation plans, I received the reply: 'I have no technical competence to deal with such (an) issue' (Marie, email: 21 June 2016), and 'I do not have the fundamentals' (Trotignon, email: 4 July 2016). Trotignon had already highlighted the point three years before when he declared: 'In our analyses, we do not make any operational recommendations.' (Trotignon, Interview: 24 June 2013).

I acknowledge this situation, but I argue that, when it comes to the definition of what Strachan-Morris calls 'evacuation trigger plans', no one is better placed than the analyst, equipped with a theoretically informed approach, to define this point.

3. Stage 1: Reformulate the question: requesting an evacuation plan – what does it *really* mean?

We have seen above what the traditional challenges of the evacuation plan are. The situation in Jeddah in 2004 was not unique but complicated by the lack of experience of both the customer and the security organisation tasked to draft the plan. The security consultancy, headquartered in Paris, was at a loss to propose a rational and danger-free solution, seeing exfiltration, extraction and evacuation as one and the same thing.

What was difficult to understand, for both the customer and the consultancy, was that a clandestine exfiltration, which was their preconceived idea of an evacuation plan, conducted without the consent and support of the Saudi authorities, was simply out of the question and would result in a catastrophe, involving shootings, arrests, jail terms and

probable deaths, not to mention a diplomatic incident of unprecedented magnitude. The request for an evacuation plan reflected an increasing anxiety from the DCN management and preparing to evacuate was a way of expressing their fear. It meant for the security practitioner, that the evacuation plan was just one aspect of a more complex feeling of insecurity and that a constant monitoring of the situation communicated to the DCN hierarchy with regular updates should have been the path to follow. Because the request was never analysed and the real expectations never measured, this was never done.

Furthermore, this 2004 evacuation plan continued on a wrong path because the consultancy was not clear enough about what an evacuation plan should achieve. In fact, when I left the project, ten months later, it was not completed.

4. Stage 2: Establishing the limits of the question: customer expectations and risk appetite.

It was clear from the inception of the task that the risk appetite of the DCN was very low. The Karachi incident and the resounding court case, that found the DCN guilty of negligence, had traumatised both employees and employers to the point where all had an expectation of zero risk, zero threat and zero incidents, an illusory and somehow dangerous expectation. The security managers, eager to satisfy the corporate customer, tried to reinforce this illusion, but it did not reflect the reality of the situation, as will be now demonstrated.

To understand a situation and establish its working limits, the first thing to do is to put the project in a timeline. Changes in phases, new locations and transfer of responsibilities do have an impact on the risk equation, something a diagram always helps to clarify.

An industrial venture goes through three phases: (1) project (2) construction / maintenance and (3) operations. Each phase presents specific security concerns. In the Sawari II project, the project and construction phases started in 1994 and ended up in 2004 when Al-Dammam, the last of the three frigates was delivered to the Saudi navy. The project (1) and construction (2) phases were led entirely in the shipyards in Lorient and the ships were then delivered to the Saudi navy in stages. On 26 July 2002, the Al-Riyadh frigate was brought under the Saudi flag at a ceremony in Toulon. The Al-Damman frigate was launched on 7 September 2002 in Lorient and started sea-testing in September 2003.

The first vessel for Saudi Arabia, the Al-Riyadh frigate, was delivered in July 2002. The Makkah and the Al-Dammam, were commissioned in 2004.
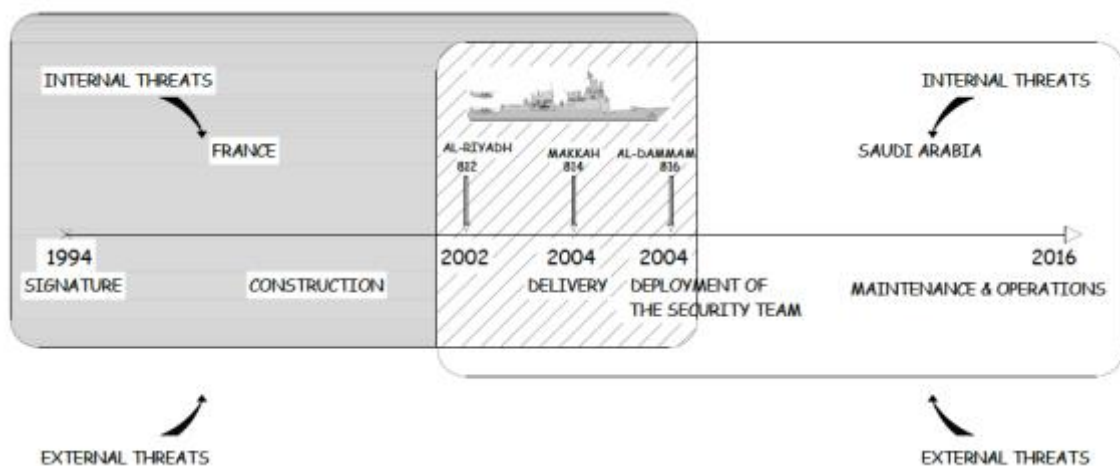

Figure 3: The Sawari II timeline: 1994-2016

Establishing the timeline graphically highlights the phases of the project and puts them into context. As can be observed on figure 2, the DCN workforce was deployed in Jeddah in 2004, once the three frigates had been commissioned and delivered to the Saudi navy. From that time, between fifteen and twenty specialists worked daily on the Jeddah naval base and two security consultants were looking after their security from the moment they left the base in the afternoon until they returned to the base the next morning.

Once delivered, the security for the frigates passed to Saudi responsibility, as well as, at least in theory, the protection of the workforce working on the project. Obviously, the fact that the DCN workers performed their tasks in the close and secure environment of a naval base limited their risk exposure, since assets and personnel were subject to military protection. However, incidents in such environment could occur as the incident on 1st May 2003 [5] illustrates. Saudi military authorities, still in a psychological state of denial regarding the domestic terrorist threat, provided no protection to the French workforce, between their place of residence and the naval base, a major concern for the DCN customer, already distressed by the Karachi incident still fresh in everybody's memories.

b. Placing the project in a cultural environment

In the reflexive cultural realist (RCR) approach, the word reflexive matters. It is not just there to satisfy this taste for symmetry and the charm that 3-letter acronyms seem to have on western minds. It does matter. As Barkin posits:

> Reflexiveness can be thought of as an awareness of the inherent limits and ambiguities of one's approach. This entails recognition that one's analysis will inherently be biased on one's own perspective, because that is the only perspective one can really know, and that one cannot claim certainty in the estimation of the thinking of adversaries or counterparties. It also entails recognition that, whether or not one aspires to value-neutrality (or objectively) in one's research, one cannot attain it. (…) Reflexivity is, in a sense, a form of prudence as applied to analysis. (Barkin 2008: 11)

When applying the RCR method to describe situations, the analyst is aware of these limitations. Reflexive thinking means, for the private security analyst, being conscious of the cultural limits of one's intellectual process.
Evacuation plans often neglect the importance of the cultural aspects of a situation. Those I have consulted in my professional life are usually cumbersome cut & paste documents that have been used by different companies all over the world and in all sorts of different

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[5] An American citizen was killed in a May 1, 2003, shooting attack at the King Abdul Aziz naval base in al-Jubail, about 250 miles northeast of Riyadh. Few details about that shooting were released. The attacker, who was dressed in a Saudi navy uniform, escaped (CBS news May 2, 2004) retrieved from: http://www.cbsnews.com/news/westerners-slain-in-saudi-terror/

circumstances. Yet, culture matters. An evacuation plan in South America or in Kazakhstan should be applied with local cultural idiosyncrasies in mind. People are the product of cultures and as such will react differently in stressing conditions. We may not always be able to understand what these differences will entail in terms of behaviour, but we can endeavour to look for them.

Betts warned us about 'the danger of adopting a western attitude when faced with another culture' (Betts 2010:3). What Betts tell us is that even if we do not entirely succeed, we must, as an analyst, understand the importance of the cultural aspect and give it its importance in the security equation.

From the analyst's standpoint, two important cultural elements were to be considered in the years of turmoil 2003-4. Firstly, that the spate of violence that shook the Saudi society was unprecedented and took, by surprise, both the government and its security apparatus. The second one is that authorities took a long time to accept the magnitude of the threat. Even when they finally took the measure of it, it forced them into an attitude that was incompatible with the security of the DCN workforce. A theoretically informed analysis would have shown without ambiguity that the government could not provide *visible protection* to any expatriate workforce. It would have vindicated the Jihadi affirmation that the Saudi monarchy preferred to protect foreign miscreants than submitting to the will of God, at a time when both camps were vying for support in the population. This was a card the Saudi regime could not play without losing popular support. So, it was entirely logical that the Saudi government did not provide any protection to the French workforce, simply because it was culturally unacceptable in this precise context. This blunt attitude, because unexplained, was a terrible source of anxiety for the DCN management in Lorient, a feeling shared by their engineers who felt nervous about their security and therefore vulnerable. This feeling was reinforced by the impression that the reaction of the security forces to the Vinnel and Oasis compound attacks had been, to say the least, ambiguous[6]. Because I had been part of comparable missions in North Africa, I

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[6] On 12 May 2003, an attack on the Vinnel compound in Riyadh claimed 35 killed and 200 wounded. The following year, an attack on the oasis compound in Al Khobar left 22 killed of which 19 were selected foreigners. Although the oasis was under siege by security forces, the gunmen managed to escape!

shared their feelings[7]. This created a strong feeling of distrust towards the Saudi security forces. This prejudice was first a legacy of the Karachi experience where their colleagues had died, largely due to a poor display by Pakistani forces; and secondly, it showed a French cultural prejudice against Arabs, who were not considered as reliable and competent partners. From the Saudi side, the French were complicated to understand, worked very little hours and could not speak English correctly, which did not attract much sympathy. Their agnostic attitude, sometimes imprudently advocated, created a wall of misunderstanding and distrust between these unnatural allies, adding to the anxiety of the western population.

5. Stage 3: Define forces, indicators, variables and relevant data

Evaluating when to leave a country without an in-depth study of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) objectives and strategy was at best an educated guess, at least a decision made on the basis of unsubstantiated preconceived western ideas.

As discussed in chapter 5, forces acting against the project should have been studied at the global, regional and local level.

a. Global level:

At a global level, applying the RCR means comprehending which global events still carried a significant impact in the geographical area of operations, both from a constructivist-realist and from a cultural perspective. In 2004, the most important recent event had been 9/11 and its impact determined the complex security situation in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia. It must be borne in mind that in 2003, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, all the objectives of the US government: capture or kill Osama bin Laden, and his partner Mullah Omar; vanquish the Taliban, replace Saddam Hussein with a pro-American democracy in Iraq, had failed, to the point where the US did not appear

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[7] When I worked in Algeria during the early 2000's, immediately after the end of a decade of civil war, our bus of expatriates was accompanied from the place of residence to the air force base, in the morning and in the afternoon by 2 military trucks – one in front of the bus and one behind - with approximately 35 military troops fully armed and equipped, preceded by a civilian vehicle with 4 armed policemen on board. Security in Algeria was taken very seriously and Algerian authorities were conscious of the magnitude of the risk incurred by their expatriate business partners.

anymore as an invincible superpower but, in Roy's words, 'as a power tied up in knots, incapable of policing the world'. (Roy 2007: xx).

When the DCN workforce was deployed in Jeddah, the US in Iraq experienced their first setback and the quagmire that began antagonised, slowly but surely, the majority of the Arab-Muslim population of the Middle East. An RCR reading grid would have focused on the cultural and social consequences of the Iraqi adventure and how the Saudi population would perceive the suffering of Iraqis. As Lewis asserted:

> Islam is not only a matter of faith and practice. It is also an identity and a loyalty – for many an identity and a loyalty that transcends all others. (Lewis 2003: 17)

Furthermore, from a purely realist perspective, the American decisions were illogical. Traditionally, hegemons try to maintain the status quo, but the neo-conservative Bush administration, by destroying Iraq, smashed the existing balance of power, without any result other than favouring those they considered as their worst enemy, the Islamic republic of Iran. The resistance of Iraqis, now perceived as hurting Muslim brethren fighting a crusader invasion, enchanted the Saudi radicals and proved that it was possible, through an asymmetric strategy, to confront the American superpower and morally defeat it. As Roy remarked:

> The asymmetric war of the weak against the strong, illustrated by the roadside bombs in Iraq which cause the majority of the American casualties, has been transplanted into the strategic domain. (Roy 2007: 9)

The difficulties met by the US military in Afghanistan and Iraq, emboldened the Saudi jihadists and triggered the unprecedented spat of violence in the kingdom that coincided, worryingly, with the deployment of the DCN workforce in Jeddah.

b. Regional level

When the DCN workforce was deployed in Jeddah, the whole region was in turmoil. The Americans were busy destroying the regional fragile equilibrium, leaving Iraq devastated and rudderless, and worrying their Saudi allies caught between their traditional alliance with Washington and the emotional rejection of everything western by a majority of its population. The neo-conservative US policy did not seem to have anticipated the

consequences of their military actions in the Middle East. As Roy explained, for the neo-conservative lobby, 'the structural explanation of terrorism argues that it is spawned by poor 'governance' of the Muslim countries in general, and of Arab ones in particular.' (Roy 2004: 30). Furthermore,

> Neo-conservatives refused to take into account the collective dimension resulting in neglecting the importance of cultural sentiments, above all with the sense of national belonging and religious identities which re-emerged in regional opposition. (Roy 2004: 32)

Seeing the regional security situation through a cultural lens would have revealed that, for a majority of Arab Muslims, the war with the west was a permanent feature of their history and that Osama bin Laden, in the tradition of Muslim heroes of the past, on par with the Crusades hero, Saladin, personified this struggle in contemporary times. Hudson argues that:

> A nation's leaders rise in part because they articulate a vision of the nation's role in world affairs that corresponds to deep cultural beliefs about the nation. (Hudson 2007: 116)

This is an apt definition of the role bin Laden played in the 'Arab nation' self-image. He spoke to the vision Arabs have of themselves. Bin Laden, after 9/11 had become for most Muslims:

> A liberator of the downtrodden people (…) He is a symbol of love. Osama bin Laden is person in whom the entire world sees their hopes and wishes. Osama bin Laden is a symbol of the people's hatred of the United States. The United States can never catch Osama bin Laden because he lives in the heart of every Muslim. (Mangi 2003: 4)

The western propaganda about the character of bin Laden as a terrorist met with little or no echo in the Muslim world. Because, for bin Laden, as for most Muslims, the 'Crusaders' offensive attacks on Islam is the main thing' (Scheuer 2004: 129).

Bin Laden's analysis of regional politics struck a chord in people's hearts:

> Who are the ones who implanted and established the rulers of the Arabian Gulf? They are none other than the Crusaders, who appointed the Karzai of Kabul, established the Karzai of Pakistan, implanted the Karzai of Kuwait and the Karzai of Bahrain and the Karzai of Qatar and others. And who are the ones who appointed the Karzai of Riyadh and brought him, after he used to be a bandit in Kuwait, a long time ago in order to fight with them against the

Ottoman Empire and its leader Ibn Rashid? They are none other than the Crusaders and they are continuing to enslave us up to this very day. (Osama bin Laden: 2001)

The main consequence of US intervention in Iraq from a social and cultural standpoint was that it generated an 'interregional' unexpected feeling of Arab solidarity highlighted by Scheuer's comment:

Once Islam is attacked, each Muslim knows his personal duty is to fight. He needs no one else authority, not even his parents; indeed, he would be guilty of sin if he did not respond to an attack as best he can. (Scheuer 2004: 7)

The American invasion in Iraq restored a fading Jihadi movement, as Abu Musa al-Suri remarked:

The American occupation of Iraq inaugurated a `historical new period' that almost single-handedly rescued the jihadi movement just when many of its critics thought it was finished. (Wright: 2006)

This attack on false pretence, weapons of mass destruction that were never found, was to fuel Arab anger and constituted a magnificent tool for propaganda and support for Saudi jihadists.

c. Domestic level

By accepting the corridor of action given to jihadi fighters to transform their beliefs into what they perceived as perfectly justified violence, the analyst, using a RCR perspective, would have delimitated the actions these groups would favour locally. Guided by the ambiguous notion that 'Jihadism is not a violent philosophy, but a political movement that exercises the right to self-defence' (Zabel 2007: 4), the analyst must focus on what the adversary may think, feel and want, and compare these beliefs, feelings and objectives with the actions already carried out. Projection or extrapolation techniques can then be applied to the situation to determine a short-term future.

From the corporate customer's standpoint, these 'philosophical' considerations were of secondary importance. What mattered was (1) whether the DCN workforce could be primary targets for the militants, (2) to evaluate the real motivation of the Saudi security forces to protect their workforce, and (3) to agree on a time when the threat would become

unbearable and unjustifiable before a French court of law and the decision to leave would be taken.

The intuitive feeling shared by the expatriate community was that the security forces were not enthusiastic defenders of any of the numerous foreign non-Muslim workers in the kingdom. In an interview with Al Jazeera, Sa'd Al Faqih, leader of the UK-based movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, revealed that:

> Saudi authorities have information that there is, in the security agencies, themselves, huge support, and an unprecedented sympathy for bin Laden. (Kurayshi: 2002)

There was no doubt about the discreet support al Qaeda benefited in some parts of the Saudi social fabric. As Qenan Al-Ghamdi remarked:

> Al Qaeda has infiltrated Saudi Arabia more than we had imagined, because extremist ideas, like those of bin Laden have roots here. When bin Laden calls for jihad or recruits, his ideas find many takers here. (Al Ghamdi: 2002)

Discussion with Saudi military people on the naval base, and other Arab expatriates in the compounds confirmed this unnerving impression. The DCN leadership could not ignore this state of affairs for too long without engaging their legal liability. As Abd Al-Bari wrote in the newspaper *Al Quds Al Arabi* in August 2002:

> The majority of the Saudi people support Sheikh Osama Bin Laden and regard him as a popular hero who succeeded in delivering a strong blow to the United States. (Abd-al-Bari: 2002)

This opinion was confirmed by a poll conducted by Saudi intelligence and shared with the US government which revealed that 'more than 95% of Saudis between 25 and 41 expressed sympathy for Osama bin Laden' (Garfinkle 2002: 145).

This popularity of bin Laden's ideas was an intangible force that definitely belonged to the security equation, because it could morph at any time into violent action. As Peters aptly wrote: 'If there is a single power the west underestimates, it is the power of collective hatred.' (Peters 1999: 13). An analyst armed with a RCR reading grid could have added value and informed the DCN corporate customer, with a solid structured

reflection based on a cultural assessment of the nature of power in the region and its acceptable use.

i. Understand how Jihadists see power and its use

The jihadist's concept of power and its acceptable use was not a secret, even in 2004. Osama bin Laden, Zayman al Zawahiri and their followers had made unambiguous statements about the reason why violence was the only possible way to compensate for the military weakness of the Muslim mujahidin faced by the armies of the west and of Israel. The justification was simple and straightforward.

For Abu Musab Al-Suri[8]

> Democracy is an assault on Islam (…) western liberal principles contribute to the corruption of Islam by encouraging practices that exceed or contradict the sharia, such as freedom of belief (or unbelief), freedom of speech (even to insult what is holy) and equal rights of men and women, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, education religion, equating believers with unbelievers, sinners with the innocent, and men with women in all situation(s) regardless of the role God meant them to play. (Al Suri, Open Source Center, 'Future of Iraq, Arabian peninsula after the Fall of Baghdad' pp. 1041-43)

Jihadi strategists showed a surprising interest and knowledge in western military strategy and adapted some of its principles to support their warfare tactics. Abu Ubayd Al-Qurashi embraced some of Clausewitz principles. He wrote in 2002:

> There are two fundamental principles behind all strategic planning that ought to guide all other considerations. … First getting to know the enemy centre of gravity when one is planning for war… Second, being sure to direct all available forces against this centre during the great offensive (Al Qurashi: 2002).

For Qurashi, the jihadi movement is vastly outmatched, under gunned and overpowered. But scarce resources and inherent weaknesses have made the jihadist movement more flexible, more creative and more resilient. The Qurashi strategy remains very generic and considers, essentially, a way to conduct war against the forces of the Crusaders. Strategically, in 2002, al Qaeda opted to open a second front in the region, this time against the near enemy, the Saudi monarchy. The number, frequency and violence of the

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[8] Whose real name was Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, a Syrian national and an influential Jihadi strategist.

attacks led against the regime, during the period 2002-4, aimed to ridicule the Saudi government, expel all western interference from the kingdom and ultimately transform the Saudi regime into a genuine Muslim land ruled by sharia law.

These actions were rendered possible by the positive resonance that the al Qaeda philosophy had with the Saudi people in general, including members of the armed forces. Support was never officially acknowledged by the regime, but suspected at some stage. Scheuer mentions that:

> Not only arms and ammunitions were supplied by the National Guard, but additional weaponry was flowing from Iraq from the huge ordnance stocks that became available in Iraq after the fall of Saddam. (Scheuer 2004: 73)

After the questionable performance of the National Guard and security forces during the attack on the Oasis compound on 29[9]th May 2004, rumours of collusion between the National Guard and Al Qaeda circulated. With hindsight, it appears that these rumours were founded. Scheuer reveals:

> Just after the fall of Kabul in 2001, an Al Qaeda computer was recovered that contained a selection of secret Saudi government documents apparently pilfered by Al Qaeda sympathisers in the Saudi bureaucracy. They included scanned copies of handwritten notes of a Saudi secret police agent who had been assigned to monitor activities of radical Islamic preachers and their followers. (Scheuer 2004: 72)

Newsweek even reported that more and more AK47's and RPG's were turning up in Saudi Arabia, and that AK47's could be purchased for five or six US dollars (Isikoff: 2003).

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[9] Saudi security forces have been criticised for allowing the perpetrators to move freely from one target to another as late as five hours into the attack, to eat and sleep at the hotel and to give an interview to Al Jazeera with an Italian hostage that they later killed over the phone during their operation. Government forces also failed to prevent the attackers from fighting their way out of the compound and escaping, triggering alarming questions regarding a possible complicity between elements of the National Guard and the terrorists.

ii. Identify these groups tactics while at the same time evaluate their cultural impact on the communities.

That violence against non-Muslims, and hit-and-run confrontations with the security forces were the preferred modus operandi of the militants is easily confirmed by facts (see figure 2). It is interesting to note that, at that time, suicide bombings did not appear as a viable tactic. A decade later, in the whole of the Muslim world, it is a daily occurrence. But in 2003-4, if the fight was perceived as asymmetric, every mujahidin had to fight until killed. We are still in the mind-set of the Afghan mentors, fighting an asymmetric war against a better equipped, more numerous, better-organised enemy, economising scarce human resources to fight until victory. The assassinations of westerners that culminated in 2003-4 in Saudi Arabia, must be seen as a collateral issue in the political *cum* religious fight against the regime. Killing expatriates was never the purpose, but rather a means to pressure the regime, to humiliate the system and to drive a wedge between the monarchy and their western allies on one side and the monarchy and their subjects on the other. During this period, 'Al Qaeda Saudi leadership had few limits, few rules, and only spoke the language of violence.' (Brachman 2009: 138).

Abdel Aziz al-Muqrin[10] who took command of al-Qaeda in the kingdom on 15th March 2004[11], deliberately chose to target individual westerners to redeem Al Qaeda in the population's eyes, who had taken badly the attack on the Al-Homaya compound, where Arab expatriates had been the main victims, and also because tactically, the security forces had succeeded in disrupting the militants' infrastructure and logistic networks. From an analyst's standpoint, a correct application of the RCR reading grid would have identified the trend of an exponential increase of the risk facing individual workers of the DCN. Such an observation should have been a determinant element in the establishment of an evacuation plan trigger definition.

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[10] Al-Muqrin, the author of the gruesome assassinations and decapitations of American contractors R. Jacobs, K. Scroggs, from Vinnell and P.M. Johnson, was eventually killed in a shootout with the police in Riyadh on 18th June 2014. (Brachman 2009: 154). See Table 1 below.

[11] When Khalid al-Hajj, the previous commander, was killed in a shootout with the police.

iii. *Favour a graphic representation of the events*

Like most security analysts and consultants, caught up in the whirlwind of violence that characterises this period, I remember it was difficult to follow the logic in the events unfolding. Most analysts, failing to understand the logic in what happened, endorsed the descriptive approach to incidents, compiling items of information about location, number of people involved, weapons used and tactics deployed, in order to describe *modi operandi* in order to provide some sort of guidance to devise mitigation measures. To do so, the maximum amount of information had to be extracted from open source media.

The following table is a compilation of the major security incidents known to the public[12] and is organised according to four criteria:

1. Attacks on western expatriates.
2. Attacks against Saudi government targets (mainly buildings and government departments).
3. Shootouts between jihadists and security forces.
4. Jihadists who chose to surrender to the Saudi authorities after promises of amnesty.

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[12] The list is a compilation of events cited in Brachman (2004), pp141 to 156; 'Al Qaeda Victory', in *Imperial Hubris*, by Scheuer (2004), pp 91 to 100 and in 'L'Arabie dans l'oeil du Cyclone', in Kepel's *Fitna* , p. 231.

Date	Incident	Attack on western expatriates	Attack on government targets	Shootout between AQAP and security forces	Militants surrender
2003					
20 Feb	An American employee of BAE Systems was shot to death in his car in Riyadh.	✓			
1 May	An American was also killed at the King Abdul Aziz naval base in al-Jubail, about 250 miles northeast of Riyadh. Few details about that shooting were released. The attacker, who was dressed in a Saudi navy uniform, escaped.	✓			
12 May	35 are killed and over 200 wounded during a suicide attack on the Vinnel compound in Riyadh.	✓			
31 May	2 police officers and a militant are killed.			✓	
14 June	Security forces raided a building in the Khalidiya neighbourhood of Makkah. Two Saudi police officers and five suspects were killed in a shootout. Twelve suspects were arrested including two from Chad and one Egyptian.			✓	
28 July	Six militants, four Saudis, two Chadians, and two police officers were killed in a police raid on a farm outside of Al-Qassim.			✓	
23 September	Three militants and a police officer are killed in a gunfight at a Riyadh hospital.			✓	
3 November	Police surround militant hideout in Riyadh and kill two.			✓	
6 November	Two militants surrounded by the police in Riyadh blow themselves up.			✓	

8 November	A truck bomb explodes at an Arab housing compound in Riyadh, killing 17 and injuring 120.		
8 December	An unnamed militant is killed at a Riyadh gas station.		✓
2004			
19 January	Shootout in Al-Nassim district (Riyadh).		✓
29 January	One unnamed gunman captured and five police officers killed in a shootout in the Al-Nassim district of Riyadh.		✓
April	*United States Embassy issues a travel advisory for the kingdom and urges all US citizens to leave.*		
5 April	An unnamed militant is reported killed in a car chase in Riyadh.		✓
12 April	A police officer and one militant are killed in a shootout in Riyadh.		✓
13 April	Four police officers are killed in two attacks by militants. Several car bombs are found and defused.	✓	
15 April	*The United States orders all governmental dependents and nonessential personnel out of the kingdom as a security measure.*		
21 April	A suicide bomber detonates a car bomb in Riyadh at the gates of a building used as the headquarters of the traffic police and emergency services. Five people die and 148 are injured.	✓	
22 April	Police in Jeddah kill three unnamed militants in an incident in the Al-Fayha district.		✓
1 May	Seven people (two US citizens, two Britons, an Australian, a Canadian and a Saudi) are killed in a rampage at the premises of a petroleum company	✓	

	in Yanbu by three brothers. All the attackers, dressed in military uniforms, are killed.	
22 May	German chef Hermann Dengl is shot and killed at a Jarir bookstore in Riyadh.	✓
29 May	22 are killed during an attack on the Oasis compound in Al-Khobar. After a siege the gunmen escape. 19 of those killed are foreigners.	✓
6 June	Simon Cumbers, an Irish cameraman for the BBC, is killed and the reporter Frank Gardner very severely wounded by gunshots to his head and spine in Riyadh.	✓
8 June	Robert Jacobs, a US citizen working for Vinnel Corp., is killed at his villa in Riyadh.	✓
13 June	US expatriate Kenneth Scroggs is killed and another Paul Johnson working for Lockheed Martin was kidnapped at a fake police checkpoint in Riyadh. A car bomb is also discovered on this date.	✓
18 June	US citizen Paul Johnson is beheaded in Riyadh. His body is found some time later. A few hours later security services kill five militants including Abdelaziz al-Muqrin the al-Qaeda leader in Saudi Arabia. A dozen are reported captured.	✓
23 June	*Saudi government offers a thirty-day limited amnesty to 'terrorists'.*	
1 July	Abdullah ibn Ahmed Al-Rashoud is killed in shootout east of the capital. Bandar Al-Dakheel escapes. Two policemen are killed.	✓
4 July	The bodies of Mohsen Al-Seikhan and Nasser Ibn Rashid Al-Rashid are discovered. One	✓

Date	Event			
	had had his leg crudely amputated. Both seem to have been wounded in fights with the security services and died later.			
13 July	Khaled al-Harbi, who is listed on the government's most-wanted list, surrenders in Iran, and is flown to Saudi Arabia.			✓
14 July	Ibrahim al-Harb surrenders in Syria.			✓
20 July	Shootout in Riyadh. Eisa ibn Saad Al-Awshan (number 13 on the list of the 26 most-wanted militants) is killed. Saleh al-Oufi (#4), the head of al Qaeda in the kingdom escapes from the raid on the compound where he had been living with his extended family.		✓	
23 July	*Amnesty offer expires. Six wanted people had turned themselves in.*			
4 August	Tony Christopher, an Irish expatriate, is shot and killed at his desk in Riyadh.	✓		
5 August	Faris al-Zahrani (#11 on the government's list of most-wanted) is captured in Abha without a fight. (He was executed on 2 January 2016 by the Saudi Government along with 46 others convicted of terrorism).		✓	
30 August	An unnamed US government employee is shot while leaving a bank in Jeddah.	✓		
11 September	Two small bombs go off in Jeddah near the Saudi British and Saudi American Banks. Nobody is injured.	✓		
15 September	Edward Smith, a British expatriate working for Marconi, is shot dead at a supermarket in Riyadh. No arrests are made.	✓		

26 September	Laurent Barbot, a French employee of a defence electronics firm, is shot dead in his car in Jeddah. (Five Chadians confessed to the crime in June 2005).	✓	
4 November	Unnamed 'deviant' is arrested in a shootout at an Internet café in Buraidah, Qassim region. Two policemen are injured.		✓
9 November	Shootout in Jeddah. On Al-Amal Al-Saleh Street, police capture four unnamed militants and seize eight AK47's and hundreds of locally-made bombs. No deaths are reported.		✓
10 November	Government announces the interception of 44,000 rounds of ammunition being smuggled in from Yemen. One Saudi waiting for the shipment is arrested.	✓	
13 November	Five unnamed militants arrested in Riyadh and Zulfi. A number of machine guns and other weapons are captured. Nobody is hurt in the gunfight.		✓
17 November	A police officer (Private Fahd Al-Olayan) is killed and eight are injured in a shootout in Unayzah, Qassim. Five people of interest are detained. Computers, pipe bombs and SAR 38000 are seized.		✓
6 December	Invasion of U.S. Consulate in Jeddah: Five employees are killed as five al-Qaeda militants attack outbuildings and the chancery building before Saudi forces retake the property. Four Saudi Special Forces were wounded, four hostages were killed and a further 10 wounded in the crossfire.	✓ ✓	

29 December	Two suicide car bombs explode in Riyadh, one outside the Interior Ministry complex, the other near the Special Emergency Forces training centre. A passer-by is killed and some people are wounded. In a resulting gun battle, seven suspected militants are killed. Two (Sultan Al-Otabi and Faisal Al-Dakheel) were on the kingdom's list of 26 most wanted.	✓

Table 1: List of recorded security incidents in KSA in 2003 and 2004

The following graph provides a graphic impression of the level of violence and rhythm of attacks during the 2003-2004 period.
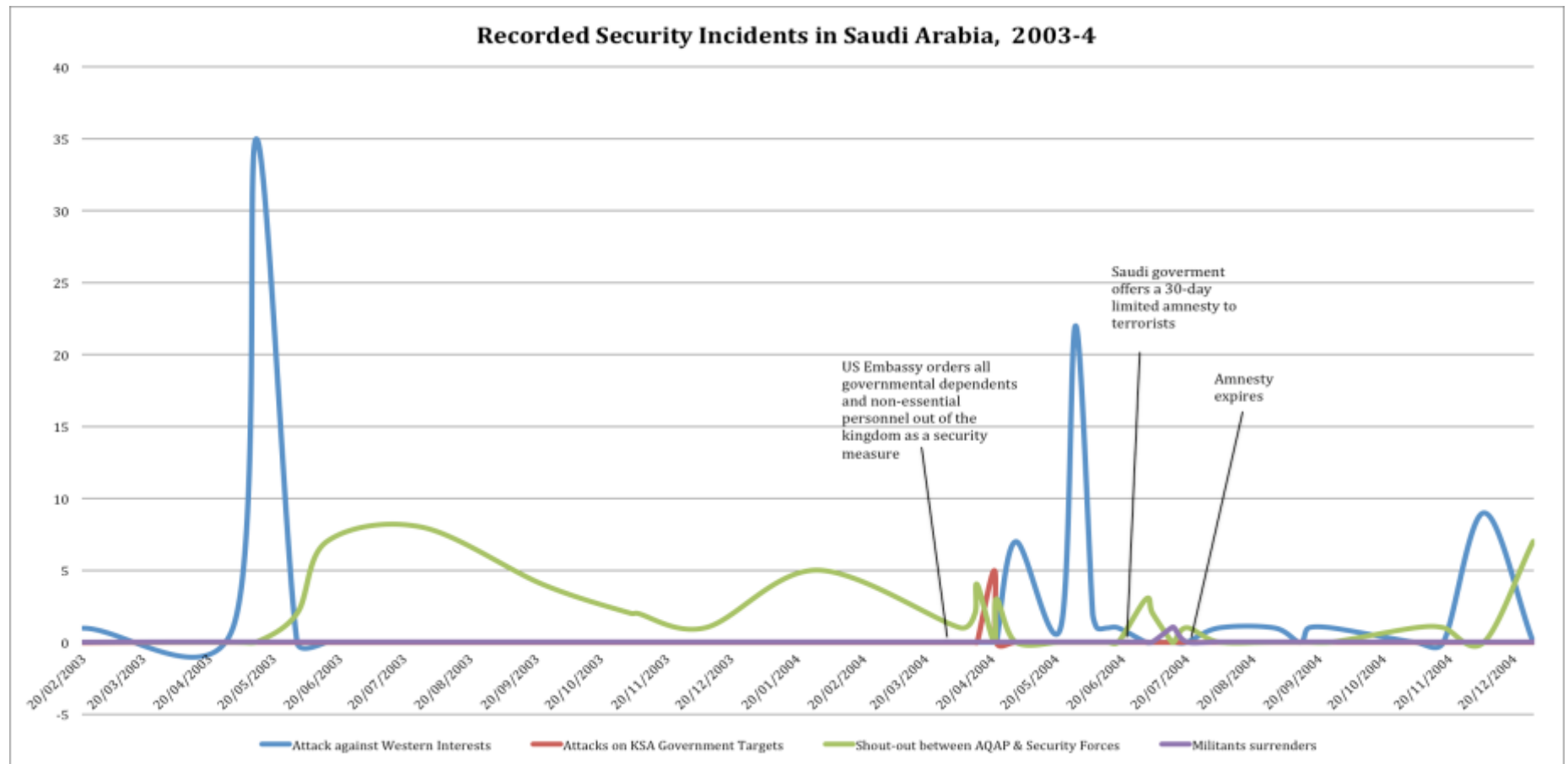
Figure 4: Security incidents in KSA 2003-4

How does this table of incidents and Reflexive Cultural Realism relate? What do these figures tell us about power, culture and strategy? How does the theoretical framework make these events more significant to the analyst about 'what is really happening' and suggest what might come next?

The forces facing each other have already been established, as well as those occupying the grey area in-between, comprising elements in the Security forces and the National Guard sympathetic to the al-Qaeda rhetoric. Their interactions are shown or can be deducted from the reading of events in figure 4.

Although these groups' actions formed the basis for an understanding of the security situation, their motivations, and therefore their intentions, could only be understood when observed from a reflexive cultural realist perspective. The concept of power in Al-Qaeda and the Saudi monarchy, the jihadi feeling of fighting a global conspiracy against Islam, the certitude of the illegitimacy of the Saudi monarchy, and other fundamental beliefs were natural topics of reflection for an analyst using the RCR approach. To complement this study, the graphic illustration of these events would have provided graphical clues about the rhythm of violent action and perceptible changes in strategy, helping the analyst understand the possibility of the situation getting out of hand and determining indicators that would trigger the evacuation.

d. The quest for significant indicators

Indicators can be defined as those elements that provide indications to the analyst. Indicators that would help defining the evacuation plan trigger could be political or religious statements, violent actions and social movements, collected at a global, regional and domestic level that would modify in a significant way the security equation, either from a power standpoint, a cultural perspective, or both.

An analyst armed with the RCR tool would have selected indicators on the basis of their relevance to the security equation, the balance of force between the Saudi authorities and AQAP, the variation in support of the Saudi population for the jihadists actions, the attitude of the security forces in shootouts with the militants, and estimate the probable consequences of these indicators on the security of the target-population. In this case

study, the indicators could have been selected according to these collectable items that affect the balance of power between the security forces and the Saudi armed militants. The list of security events can provide some of these indicators, particularly because they show the cultural acceptability of jihadists applying rules of modern jihad endorsed by religious ideology guiding their actions. However, other items of information do have value.

What went wrong in our analysis of the security situation? Which items of information were overlooked that a RCR lens would have emphasised? Three very important events occurred during this troubled period.

The first one was the systematic issuance of lists of most wanted people[1]. This was an unprecedented move that took many analysts/observers by surprise. It indicated the determination of the Saudi government to chase down the militants, one by one, until they were victorious[2], which is exactly what they did.

The second was the significant successes of the security forces, who managed to capture or kill all the important leaders of the Saudi rebellion, a fact that was not clearly understood in the western media at the time because of the relatively unknown profiles of these leaders.[3]

The third one, the amnesty offered by the government in June 2004 for a one month period was another surprising move. Its success, in terms of tactics, remains small. Although only six jihadists surrendered, its cultural outreach was important. It meant that it was still possible to return to normality by making allegiances to the regime and avoid

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[1] On 7 May 2003, a list of 19 militants; on 6 December 2003 a list of 26 men, including 6 of the initial list; on 28 June 2004 a list of 36 militants).

[2] Which is exactly what they did. On 7 June 2006, the Saudi government announced that it had defeated al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Brachman 2009: 160).

[3] The successive leaders of AQAP all died in shootouts with the police: Youssef Saleh Al Ayiri was killed on 31 May 2003; Khalid Ali al-Hajj was killed on 15 March 2004; Abdelaziz al-Muqrin on 15 June 2004 and the last al-Qaeda leader of some significance Saud Hamoud al-Otaibi was killed on 3 April 2005.

eradication. It was the first move in the direction of the aggressive reinsertion programme later undertaken by Saudi authorities.

These events should have been considered as major indicators. All three of them gave important indications on what was happening and their evolution should have been monitored. Sadly, their significance was not understood at the time.

e. Compiling a list of indicators

After having analysed the forces at work in the security equation, analysts should compile a list of indicators (the means), which will provide them with indications (the result) about the unfolding of a situation. Indicators, in order to be meaningful, must 'be saying it often enough and loud enough' (Grabo 2004: 15). In other words, indicators must be the result of convergent items of information. Analysts should be able to collect them in mainstream and alternative media, in professional gatherings, or online. More importantly, and in line with RCR principles, indicators must be selected according to criteria reflecting values and beliefs (societal/ religious indicators) and also in terms of power (tangible and intangible power indicators). They need to have meaning with regard to the risk changes they bring to the project.

What is important is that these indicators should be linked to their possible consequences (leading to an outcome) and their value be prioritised.

For our Sawari II case study I think the following indicators should have been selected:

1. Jihadist motivations (based on a study of cultural values and beliefs).
2. Jihadist intention/ capability (seen from a constructivist-realist vision of power measured against military capabilities).
3. Security forces resilience / progress.
4. Target-population (DCN expatriate workforce) vulnerability.

Let us examine them and determine what kind of indications they could provide.

i. *Motivation indicators:*

For these indicators, any item of information which, brought to the knowledge of militants would reinforce their determination, should be listed here: declarations of influential

Saudi clerics, new strategies advertised by religious ideologies, viral jihadist videos on YouTube, global or regional political events that can be exploited by religious ideologies (any Israel-Palestinian confrontation is usually an immediate catalyst), videos released by As-Sahab Media [4], etc. Of course, Salafist preachers in specific mosques have a tremendous impact on individual militants, but indicators must be collectable, and for the western private security analyst, most of what is said in mosques is beyond reach. The security events which seem to fit the indicators definition will then be seen through the RCR prism, which is well armed to reflect local cultural power issues.

Motivation indicators will have an impact on the intention / capability indicators. I have amalgamated these two types of indicators, because if motivation stimulates intention, the latter creates the quest for capability. Intentions indicators are more difficult to collect than capability indicators. Often, a guesstimate will have to be done regarding intention, while capability may be inferred from arms seizures advised by security forces with relative confidence. Another issue is that motivation indicators cannot be expressed quantitatively on a diagram, while capability can. From an analyst's standpoint, I think keeping them together is the right thing to do, since intentions will lead to capability building, while the reverse is not true.

ii. Intention / capability indicators:

Capabilities of clandestine movements are notoriously difficult to assess. In this case study, capability can be measured by studying the shootouts incidents, the weapons seizures and arm-caches discoveries. Seizures of money, forged identification documents, use of official uniforms and cars are a strong indication of both intention and capability. These events need to be analysed through the RCR lens and their relevance for the security equation measured in terms of power strategies rather than sheer technical capability.

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[4] The As-Sahab Foundation for Islamic Media Publication has been the media production house of al-Qaeda since 2001.

In the case study, this indicator must be read in conjunction with the security forces response indicator.

iii. Security forces response indicators

Indicators that measure either the resilience or the reactive capability of the Saudi security forces were significant elements that helped determine the overall security posture of the project and the evolution of the risks menacing it. They helped measure how power equilibrium and forces change along the timeline and helped the analysts to establish trends. They also indicated changes between the security apparatus and the Saudi authorities. In other words, these indicators helped in understanding whether the Monarchy was getting the upper hand and how this evolution affected the security of the workforce.

Monitoring the curve of action-reactions from a cultural realist perspective was crucial to establish a threshold that the corporate customer would have confidently acknowledged. A word of caution though: some of these indicators can be measured quantitatively: the number of militants killed, the volume of arms and explosives seized, while other intangible indicators are more complex to evaluate. The analyst must endeavour to avoid favouring the former to the detriment of the latter.

iv. Target-population vulnerability indicators

In line with Khalsa's (2004: 10) suggestion to include vulnerability in the list of relevant indicators, the analyst using the RCR approach should create indicators to measure the vulnerability of the target population. Selecting and defining these indicators may appear complicated at first. Indicators can be as varied as reports of a worker having the feeling of being followed in the traffic; reports of cars stationing at the entrance of the compound, or outside the naval base, several days in a row, reports of unpleasant attitudes by Saudi colleagues during working hours, changes in attitude from the personnel in the compound, salespeople in shopping malls. To populate these reports, the analyst would require the help of the consultant on site who will be able to collect these items of information for them. This is easy to organise, and I have noticed that gaining support from the workforce is relatively easy, once they understand that their lives are at stake.

6. Stage 4: Establish the scenario: Moving towards the Evacuation Plan trigger definition.

Equipped with these four indicators the analyst should have disposed of enough items of information to create a single convergent scenario called *Decision to Evacuate*. The material collected by the analyst (list of perceived incidents) should be compiled into chronological order and if possible, presented in a graphic form (identical to Figure 2).

> The purpose of indications chronology is to record briefly in time sequence (by date of occurrences), all known developments, reported facts, alleged actions or plans, rumours, or anything else which might be an indication of impeding aggressive action or other abnormal activity. (Grabo 2004: 31)

The next step is to select incidents whose magnitude and proximity to the target population makes the decision to depart imminent. They could be: (1) an attack on the navy base by jihadists or (2) an attack on foreign workers in their compound or (3) a spate of assassinations – a spate can be defined by 3 occurrences - targeting individual foreign workers in the region of Jeddah. A decision by imitation is also an option, (4) when a security measure is taken by another entity, for example, when both the US and the UK authorities ask that their citizens to leave KSA, the DCN would trigger their own evacuation procedure.

These events, in order to occur, would be preceded by warning events, present in the indicators list, which, once screened through the Reflexive Cultural Realism approach, would confirm an increase in the level of threat.

The *demonstration-scenario* that begins at the outcome and reverses towards some plausible path of events is the more adapted scenario to an evacuation plan. Branch-points along the timeline recognise decisive events that will confirm the evolution towards the outcome. The advantage of this approach is that it allows an early discussion with the customer to discuss and agree on plausible triggering events.

A graphic representation of this scenario can be designed to make it more vivid for the corporate decision maker. The object of the exercise is to agree with the customer about what would constitute a sufficient reason to leave. In this case study, while expatriate workers were deployed in an extremely dangerous environment, nothing of the sort was ever envisioned. No thought was given about what drove the militants' strategies and the importance of the cultural/religious endorsement of the population of the actions of al Qaeda militants. A reflexive cultural realist approach would have demonstrated early that

the DCN workers were being put at an enormous risk almost from the inception of the mission. Such an analysis would have made clear to the DCN hierarchy that the situation was untenable and that the security conditions of their personnel had to be renegotiated with the Saudi authorities. The number of attacks and assassinations went far beyond what a theoretically informed analysis would have considered as tolerable.

A reading of figure 4 shows that during the period April-June 2004 all the signs of indicated violence directed towards foreign expatriates and that the departure of Americans by mid-April would shift the cross-lines towards lesser targets such as British and French expatriates. These attacks, because the RCR perspective would have made them intelligible, should have triggered an evacuation procedure. Although the security forces resilience indicator would have shown that shootouts with al-Qaeda were turning more and more to their advantage, the level of risk incurred by the expatriate workforce deployed in Jeddah was, at that time, unacceptable and maintaining them there was unreasonable. A reflexive cultural realist approach of the situation would have clearly demonstrated that, with the departure of most US expatriates, the French, particularly vulnerable as they were, would become the next targeted group. The level of violence had also reached an unbearable level, and equipped with the RCR tool for decision making, I would have recommended at least a partial evacuation of the workforce or a renegotiation of the protection plan for the workforce with the Saudi government.

7. Stages 5 and 6: Evaluate the chances of the scenario occurring and deliver the report

The idea of evaluating statistically the chances of such scenario occurring were never considered and are still not common practice today in security consultancies. But the rhythm of attacks and the fact that it showed no sign of abating, analysis through a Reflexive Cultural Realism prism should have been sufficient to convince the DCN management of the necessity to leave the workplace and evacuate the expatriate workforce.

Conclusion

In this case study chapter, I have demonstrated how a theoretically informed approach would have helped analysts and consultants to reasonably establish a trigger for an evacuation plan of a French workforce deployed in Jeddah in 2004, in the context of the Sawari II contract. I have candidly outlined how clueless the security team involved in this task were about the preparation of such a plan. I have underlined the importance of defining, without ambiguity, a threshold agreed by all parties that would trigger the partial or total dismantling of the mission. My purpose, in this chapter, was to demonstrate that, equipped with a theoretical approach such as the Reflexive Cultural Realism; a private security analyst committed on understanding complex power struggles in a unique cultural environment would have helped the security consultancy define this crucial moment called the evacuation plan trigger point in agreement with the corporate customer.

In this chapter, I went through the steps of the RCR method, reformulating the customer's question and understanding their requirements, analysing global events and deducing their impact at domestic level, identifying major stakeholders in the security equation, and established a solid working base to discuss the evacuation plan trigger point.

A practical application of the principles followed. I discussed forces, and the important issue of indicators. Although the RCR purpose is to uncover the reasons behind behaviours and events, I chose to use a graphic presentation of events that would have spoken with a stronger voice to the corporate customer.

Applying RCR principles to the Sawari II case study would have satisfactorily orientated the analysts' work towards a convincing determination of the threshold of the evacuation plan that the corporate customer would have understood and probably endorsed.

Chapter 8

Developing the Reflexive Cultural Realism method in context:

Reflexive Case Study Two: Pipeline security in Qatar (2005-9)

In this second reflexive case study, I will examine the security concerns of a major international joint venture[1], the Dolphin Energy gas project, regarding their pipeline network. The pipeline starts in the Qatar North Field[2], transits by Ras Laffan industrial city, crosses the Persian Gulf underwater from NE Qatar to the receiving station at Taweelah (in the Abu Dhabi emirate) and dispatches gas to customers in the UAE and Oman through a network of old and new distribution pipelines (see figure 5).

1. Project background

In 1999, the government of Abu Dhabi established Dolphin Energy Limited to implement the Dolphin gas project and link Qatar, the UAE and Oman in a unique strategic energy initiative. In this project, Mubadala Development Company, the financial arm of the government of Abu Dhabi were the main shareholder with 51% of Dolphin Energy while the remaining 49% was shared equally between Total of France and Occidental Petroleum of the USA.

After several years of planning, drilling and construction, gas production started in July 2007 at the company's onshore facilities in Ras Laffan, Qatar. Here, gas drilled offshore, from two platforms positioned in the Qatar North Field, was processed in the Ras Laffan gas plant before being exported via a 364 km long underwater pipeline to the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman.

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[1] Dolphin Energy is a joint venture between Mubadala Investments (Abu Dhabi) (51%), Total of France (24.5%) and Occidental Petroleum – aka Oxy- of the USA (24.5%).

[2] The gas field Qatar shares with the Islamic Republic of Iran, where it is called the Pars field.
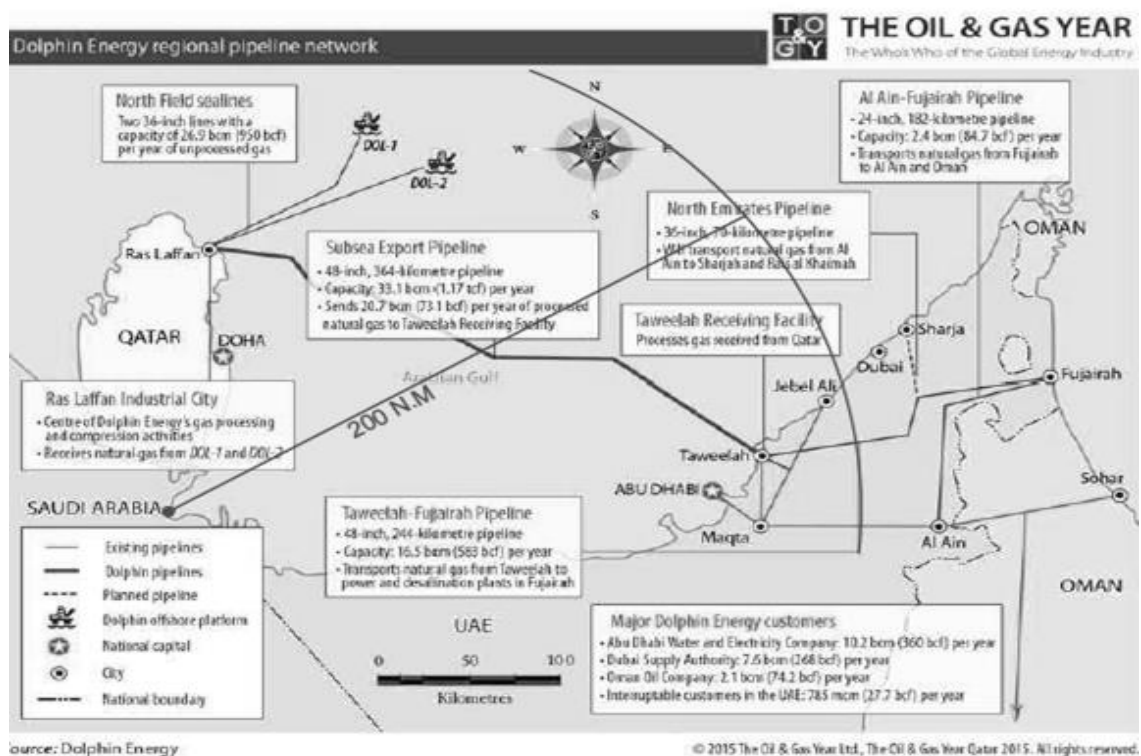
Figure 5: Dolphin Energy regional pipeline network *(©The oil & gas year, Qatar 2015)*

The overall investment in wells, underwater pipelines, processing plant, export pipelines, receiving facilities and the distribution network, was worth $4.5 billion and made, at the time, the Dolphin gas project one of the largest energy-related ventures ever undertaken in the Middle East. The long-term customers of Dolphin Energy's gas were (and still are in 2016) ADWEC (Abu Dhabi Water & Electricity Company), DUSUP (Dubai Supply Authority) and OOC (Oman Oil Company) all of which are located in the southern part of the Persian Gulf. They all have signed a gas supply agreement with Dolphin Energy for 25 years.

a. My recruitment and my role

I was recruited in 2005 as a director of security for the Dolphin Energy project, then in its construction phase[3]. My initial role, in 2005-6 was to ensure that the construction of the gas plant would be completed without incident, and my areas of responsibility were

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[3] Which lasted from 2005 to 2007.

the extraction platforms Dol-1 and Dol-2, the facility in Ras Laffan and to a lesser extent, the headquarters in Doha. When the project became operational, in 2007, I was appointed corporate security advisor for Dolphin Energy in Abu Dhabi which included responsibility for the security of the gas delivery. I was called to Abu Dhabi to advise the general management about security issues, and put in place a security programme, which until then had been absent. One of the reasons for my transfer from Doha to Abu Dhabi was that incidents had started occurring on the land pipeline between Taweelah, the gas reception station in the UAE, and Fujairah, the receiving end station close to the border with the Sultanate of Oman. In April 2007, I conducted a pipeline survey to provide a report about the risks faced by the pipeline and recommend a security programme complete with mitigation measures and security recommendations. This report was published internally in July 2007.

The 364-km underwater pipeline was not included in my scope of work, probably because threats had not been envisioned. My call to Abu Dhabi was the result of the theft of relatively valuable equipment in one of our block valve stations[4] on the pipeline route and the fear that such thefts could be repeated. The land pipeline seemed, at the time, the biggest security concern for the Emirati management.

Threats, vulnerabilities and risks were perceived as criminal in nature and therefore to be solved at the security department level. I think today, that a theoretically informed analysis of the situation would have made the pipeline study more relevant, opened eyes about what risk meant and how it could be measured, given answers to unformulated questions, and probably offered a more accurate picture of potential threats, that would have quenched the carelessness and optimism shared by most members of Dolphin Energy management.

2. Pipeline security traditional challenges

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[4] Block valve stations are regulating stations located on pipelines. With these valves the operator can isolate any segment of the line for maintenance work or isolate a rupture or leak. Block valve stations are usually located every 20 to 30 miles depending on the type of pipeline.

A pipeline is a good example of the relevance of the intellectual imbrication between IR theories and security principles, since a pipeline is, in essence, a projection of political power across geographical features.

Traditionally, attacks on pipelines are a reflection of a struggle for power and an illustration of asymmetric warfare. They are ways for the weak to weaken the oppressor, which is represented metaphorically, by the intruding pipeline. Statistics confirm that attacks on pipelines and political conflicts follow a parallel path. Thus in Iraq, during the 2004-2007 'road-side-bombs' period of the war, 465 attacks on pipelines and oil and gas personnel were carried out. Abu Baker Naji, an al-Qaeda strategist specialising in oil and gas tactics, wrote:

> Oil pipelines … are easy targets for terrorist operations. It is almost impossible for security forces to protect every foot of pipeline since they cover thousands of miles; and it is equally impossible to tighten the security measures at every pipeline. [5]

Pipelines are easy targets for politically motivated adversaries. It is, therefore, through political theories that pipeline security should be approached. What this suggests is that a factual approach to pipeline security, if not driven by a theoretically informed approach focusing on motives rather than tactics, is doomed to being always 'right with hindsight'. There are limits though to what theory can do. An RCR approach will not tell the analyst or the customer where and when militants will strike, but will inform the customer about the motives and intentions behind these attacks and suggest solutions to minimise the chances of occurrence. Another value of RCR is that it will make the perception by local stakeholders of potential grievances and injustice intelligible. Hence identifying local leaders (ethnic, tribal and influential communities' actors) and their programme is the obvious starting point.

The motivation behind a pipeline project, the invitation of partners, the choice of routes, the preparation, the construction and the protection of the pipeline itself, all these aspects, even in their most practical form, such as the deployment of expatriates and recruitment

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[5] Abu Bakr Naji, *Management of Savagery*, Trans. William McCants. Available at: http;//www.tawhed.ws/files/3372.zipp

of local people to maintain the pipeline right-of-way are, in essence, political and lay at the convergence of state and private enterprise interests. As Ali confirms:

> From extraction to transportation to consumption, the oil and gas sector encompasses strategic government interests as well as private sector involvement. (Ali 2010: 2)

Because the design of pipeline routes is a geographical projection of political and economic power, the best way to understand the threats facing these pipelines is to apply a theoretically informed approach outlining the idiosyncrasies of regional power expressed in a given cultural environment. The Reflexive Cultural Realism approach seems particularly apt at envisioning threats, assessing vulnerabilities, measuring risks and defining security challenges. Attacks can take varied forms and understanding the motives behind such attacks does not systematically provide an accurate forecast regarding the timing of attacks. Nevertheless, a cultural perspective can help narrow the gap between intentions and operating methods.

The idea behind the Dolphin Energy pipeline was for the UAE to benefit from the existence of an oversupply of gas in Qatar to maintain the momentum of their development.

Gas was in such high demand in the UAE because of its disproportionate part in power generation. As Lim& Dargin remarked: 'Gas accounts for 98%, with fuel oil comprising the rest'. (2015: 165). By the end of the 1990's, a limitation in energy supply was impeding development in the UAE. In 2007, when Dolphin energy started alimenting UAE in natural gas, it seemed that the economy of the Emirates was heading for an economic implosion, unable to meet its energy demands. The Dolphin Energy project was therefore crucial to maintain the economic development of the Emirates and its growing leadership position in the GCC. Politically it served another purpose, which was for UAE to bandwagon with Qatar and to lesser extent Oman and reinforce links between the southern Gulf States to counterbalance the Saudi Arabia hegemony. As Ali wrote:

> The Dolphin project was part of a broader political effort by the UAE to strengthen ties with other smaller Gulf States to balance Saudi Arabia, the dominant Gulf power that has been involved in several territorial disputes wit the UAE and Qatar. (Ali 2010: 16)

3. Stage 1: Reformulating the question. Pipeline security concerns: what do they reflect?

When I was transferred to Abu Dhabi and was tasked with the pipeline survey, the threats considered by the Dolphin Energy management team were only criminal in nature. This confirmed Caillaud's observation that:

> It is when customers meet their first difficulties that they tend to turn towards security. We are very far of a model where the customer wants to anticipate threats at an early stage. It is changing though, but slowly. (Caillaud, email: 3 November 2014)

When I received the pipeline survey assignment, there seemed to be no need to reformulate the question, because no questions were asked. The company was faced with a simple security problem and my task was to solve it cost-effectively. Yet there was an approach that I should have considered back then, which was to place the pipeline survey in the context of the conflicting agendas of shareholders.

Dolphin Energy Ltd was a company created in 1999 by the government of Abu Dhabi. Technically, it required taking on board two major western oil & gas companies, to lead crucial stages such as gas exploration, drilling, extraction, refining and distribution. The gas itself was the property of the state of Qatar, and was therefore managed by Qatar Petroleum (QP), the state-owned Petroleum Company of the tiny emirate. There were four participants in the project, and during my time with Dolphin Energy, it became apparent that their agendas often diverged and that the management of the project security resembled a strange and permanent tug-of-war. During the project phase, western engineering was in command. Qataris and Emiratis acted as observers, and had not much say in the technical progress and options of the operations. All technical managers were either American or French, while the Deputy General Manager was a Qatari, seconded from Qatar Petroleum (QP), whose role was to make sure that Arab interests were preserved. The construction of the industrial assets had been entrusted to JGC (Japan Gas Company) for what, was then, the biggest gas project in the region.

a. A cultural defiance

The Dolphin Energy project exacerbated a feeling that westerners found unnerving: that only Arabs could understand Arabs, and that they had been brought into the game only for their technical expertise, with no real say about the way the project would be managed. Mubadala Development Company, the Emirati state-owned company, followed their own agenda with regard to future extensions of the Dolphin Energy project, particularly towards India and its neighbours, without really informing their western partners. As a security director of this company I had to consider this cultural aspect of things at all times. Fortunately, during these years, an incredibly high gas-selling price moderated these tensions, since when money flows, tensions tend to diminish.

The cultural aspects were definitely at the centre of the security equation at Dolphin Energy, and while the situation in KSA, case study 1, was a study of opposing political objectives in a unique cultural context; the situation in Qatar was one of cultural antagonisms brought together in a common project. The absence of physical violence that surrounded the project made these rivalries and opposing idiosyncrasies less visible for an external observer but of no less importance.

4. Stage 2: Establishing the limits of the question as well as customers' expectations.

The project had gone free of incidents for two years, and gas had just begun to flow when the first incident occurred. As the UAE side of the operations had ignored security, the management turned, in relative panic, towards the VP of QHSE & S [6] who summoned me to Abu Dhabi where I was tasked with conducting the pipeline survey.

The expectations of my hierarchy were simple. Ensure the integrity of the pipeline. There seems to be no other issues because, no other issue would be discussed with non-Arab partners. While the Arab side of the management wanted thefts to stop, the western side were more worried about the idea of the pipeline encountering local opposition in the UAE, and their concern, seen in a regional context of war in Iraq and violence in KSA, certainly made sense.

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[6] Vice President for Quality, Health, Safety, Environment & Security.

a. Several customers mean different agendas

If we want to use the metaphor of a balance of power at Dolphin Energy top management level, the following could have been said: On the one scale, the Arabs, Qataris and Emiratis were keen to generate natural gas that would make Qatar richer, help modernise the UAE and make the GCC look good on the international scene. On the other side, Oxy and Total had been brought into the equation as technical experts and international players. Their purpose was profit. They were only half-happy to share profits with investors who did not bring any competence or experience to the joint venture. It was these first impressions and tensions, although subtle, which quickly arose between them. Total, a bigger and more versatile company than Oxy, had led all the technical aspects of the project, but failed to secure the leadership position during the project phase, that was assumed by an Occidental Petroleum representative. When the project became operational, in 2007, the appointed CEO of Dolphin Energy, the General Manager in Abu Dhabi and the General Manager in Doha were all Emirati nationals. One level down, in Qatar, VPs and managers' jobs were given to Qataris, most of them former Qatar Petroleum employees, in replacement of secondees from Total and Oxy who had moved to other projects. The rivalry between Qataris and Emiratis also became palpable, but the size of the Persian Gulf that separated them, and the amazing salaries they paid each other, appeased potential bellicose ardours.

As illustrated in the below timeline (figure 2), it is at the insistence of the western partners that it was decided to acquire the services of a security practitioner when the ground works began. No consideration had been previously given to security on the assumption that, as the Emirati general manager told me later in Doha: 'There are no security issues, here'. The western partners were less convinced that this was the case, and Total and Oxy insisted on having a western expatriate running the security of the project. The request was accepted in Qatar, because the management during the project phase was Franco-American, but rejected in the UAE, where nobody would see the value of such person, seen by all and sundry as a culturally foreign intruder.

b. Placing the project in a time line

Placing the project in a timeline is something I recommend for any target situation. In this case study, the operations and maintenance stage[7] had started and it was quite worrying to see that criminal acts (thefts of solar panels) had occurred almost immediately. The fact that no incident took place during the construction of the pipeline itself would suggest that the project did not create major antagonisms in the places it crossed.
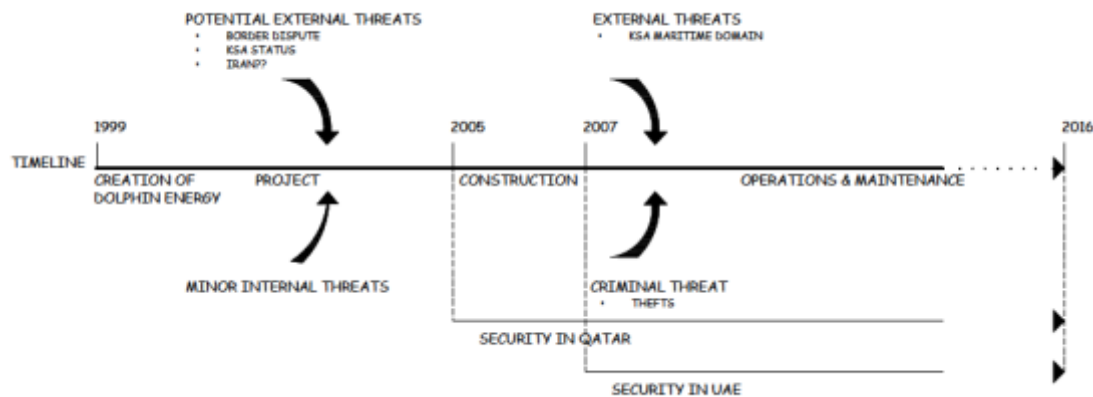
Figure 6: The Dolphin Energy project timeline

A timeline places security and threats in a context. Decision timing reveals concerns. From this figure, the observer can see that initial threats to the project were mainly political in nature and were considered as solved (resolution of border disputes). Yet the possibility of the regional hegemon to frustrate the project was not anticipated by the joint management and I remember perfectly when it occurred in 2006, probably in retaliation for the rapprochement between Qatar and Iran, as well as for the Emirati new assertiveness on the regional scene. As a contributor to the Gulf States Newsletter comments:

> In August 2006, Riyadh wrote to financiers of the Dolphin project to object to the pipeline's route. Riyadh had had six years to consider the route, so the objection was seen as an attempt to gain leverage in other disputes and pressure resurgent Emirati independence following the death of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan in 2004. (Gulf States Newsletter: 9 April 2010)

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[7] This is the second stage after construction.

The late appointment of a security director in the project also reveals the perception of a *no-threat-at-all* feeling that was the prevailing mood at Dolphin Energy Arab top management level both in Doha and Abu Dhabi.

c. Placing the project in a cultural environment

From a security perspective, Qatar and the UAE seemed very safe countries in 2005. Jihadists from neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Iraqis veterans were not welcome. From a RCR perspective, power, in both sheikhdoms, was firmly in the hands of the leaders; who shared, in part, the financial rewards brought by the gas with their subjects, this in exchange for a complete surrendering of any political claims. Furthermore, both governments exerted a very tight control at their borders to avoid any infiltration of undesired militants.

On the cultural side, the Qataris are a very united society, and there are no internal dissensions. Expatriates are numerous and, provided they acknowledge the idea that the laws apply to them and not to Qataris, life is bearable. In fact, the main antagonism that existed between social groups was in the UAE, between the city-dwellers, sophisticated Arabs in a *thobe* and *ghutrah*[8] with an English/American university education normally involved in governments projects, and Bedouins roaming the desert, moving their herds of camels from pasture to pasture, who had fallen through the cracks of recent prosperity and managed to live as far as possible from the big cities and the Emirati authorities. Driving battered Japanese pick-ups and armed with AK 47 rifles, they do not hesitate to make use of, these stateless nomadic herders are perceived by more sophisticated *Khaleeji* Arabs as smugglers, thieves and unreliable, dangerous individuals. While there are no Bedouins left in Qatar, camel herders are today imported from the horn of Africa, they constituted a source of concern for the Emirati management, who culturally associated petty crime with Bedouin standard behaviour.

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[8] The thobe or thawb, this white long-sleeve full length garment and the ghutrah, the white head cover are the distinctive traditional dress code of the menfolk in the GCC countries. Only Shias in Bahrain wear western clothes, to differentiate themselves from Sunni Bahrainis.

5. Stage 3: Define forces, indicators and variables

    a. Applying the RCR analytical tool to define forces

        i. Forces at a global level

At an international level, the analyst first examines the reasons behind the pipeline project as a projection of power. Usually, projects guided by international economics, (such as the existential need of gas by the UAE and the abundance of the commodity in Qatar), cannot be separated from political strategies that can be understood by applying realist principles and tools such as the balance of power. The Reflexive Cultural Realism approach remains the perfect tool to grasp the picture at different levels of analysis. Although Barkin suggests that 'reflexivity suggests that we cannot fully understand other actors' (2008: 7), the cultural analysis part of the RCR comes to compensate, at least in part, for this shortcoming. In our case study, a thorough historical knowledge of politics in the GCC, characterised by tensions about pre-eminence and leadership in the region and still unresolved border disputes, is a prerequisite to a study of regional pipeline security.

Establishing the impact of the project at a global level also means reviewing the relationship between the GCC countries and the world superpowers. Historically, until the discovery of oil, these countries were of strategic importance to the British as a series of calling stations on the way to India. Small in native population, but culturally consistent, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE (formerly known as the Trucial states) benefited from the protection of the British Empire from the mid-1850's until their independence in 1971. At that time, both Bahrain and Qatar declined to join the newly formed UAE. Regional protection, uniquely British for almost one hundred and fifty years, shifted, under the influence of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, towards America particularly in the last quarter of the 20th century. Yet, it is only reluctantly than the US accepted responsibility for the region. As Sick remarks:

> Even when the British withdrew in 1971, the United States did not immediately rush to fill the vacuum, constructing instead an unusual proxy arrangement with Iran (And nominally Saudi Arabia) to fill the gap (…). But it was not until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991

that the United States introduced (a) major force in the region that seemed destined to give it a dominant, sustained presence. (Sick 2009: 295)

This American involvement had considerable consequences on regional security, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where US interference was perceived with hostility by most of the population.

In Qatar and the UAE, an American presence was seen as a window of opportunity to oppose the regional domination of Saudi Arabia. The strategic positioning of the US as the new offshore balancer allowed both the UAE and Qatar to venture into international politics on their own without fear of Saudi reprisals. Consequently, there seemed to be no specific animosity between the native population, the Americans and other western foreigners.

At a global level, there was therefore no potential opposition to this gas project.

ii. The Dolphin project and regional security dynamics

The situation was more complicated at a regional level. In 2005, there was a lot of unfinished business between Saudi Arabia and its smaller neighbours regarding border disputes inherited from colonial times. Border disputes between KSA and the UAE and KSA and Qatar had regularly poisoned the relationship between these countries. In 1949, the relationship between KSA and Qatar had worsened dramatically over the status of the Buraimi oases, seized militarily by KSA and reclaimed successfully by the British-officered Trucial levies, a source of deep humiliation for the Saudi monarchy. In 1974, a settlement was reached with Abu Dhabi regarding these oases. The Saudi-Qatari respective claims over these oases were discussed in 1965 and again in 1995.

Border disputes were a recurrent issue in GCC politics and would play some role in the Dolphin Energy project that, surprisingly, helped in resolving most of these.

This pipeline network represents a projection of power that combines the needs and objectives of both government and the private sector. This convergence of interest has had a determinant effect on regional security dynamics. As Ali highlighted:

> From extraction to consumption, the oil and gas sector encompasses strategic government(s) interests as well as private sector involvement. With the nearly universal reliance of countries

on oil and gas to meet (their) energy demands, it is a sector of utmost importance for regional security. (Ali 2010: 3)

In terms of regional politics, the Dolphin Energy project was a blow to the regional supremacy enjoyed by Saudi Arabia. Built without their official consent, with two western companies, it was certainly received in Riyadh with annoyance. Not that KSA really has a say on economic ventures of the other GCC states but, as Eilts remarked:

> Saudi leaders view their country, by virtue of its size, affluence and Arab and Islamic credentials, as first among equals among its Arabian peninsular confreres. (Eilts 2006: 222)

This should not hide the fact that smaller GCC states do vie for more independence regarding their economic and foreign policies. Their incredible riches make them feel entitled to exist by themselves on the global map, and drive their foreign policies towards a more international presence and a more assertive foreign policy to counterbalance the overwhelming power of Saudi Arabia and their own military weakness. In an interview held on 21st June 2009 with Hady Amr, then director of the Brookings Institution in Doha, this security dilemma for a country like Qatar, a partner in the Dolphin Energy project, was simply summarised:

> In terms of population Qatar represents 1% of Saudi Arabia and compared to the Iranian side it is 1/3rd of 1%. It does not even try to defend itself militarily in the neighbourhood. What Qatar does is to be seen as a central pillar of the way it build (s) its security. It is through its diplomatic activity, and I have spoken to very senior members of the government, when you ask them why do you do all these conferences, they reply: Qatar is a very small country, we have no military, we have only two things: first is the presence of the (US) military base here, this is our final guarantee of security and our second one is our international presence manifested through the Doha Debates, Education City, Al Jazeera; that is like our military, that is how we project power in the region, and for us , these conferences are like our aircraft carriers, Al Jazeera is like our air force, education city is like our army, this is how we organize our security by building relationship(s) on the one hand with the leading players of the world, number two by giving a large international audience to Qatar so that they care for Qatar security; thirdly Al Jazeera enables Qatar to develop relationship(s) with ordinary people in the Arab world. (Hady Amr, interview: 21 June 2009)

Dolphin Energy could have been added to this list of items that provide security to the country and orientate its foreign policy. From the United Arab Emirates side, a similar approach supported the Dolphin Energy gas project.

Put simply, the Dolphin Energy project was for Qatar and the UAE a successful attempt to bandwagon between equals outside of the protective, and sometimes overwhelming, mantel of the Saudi hegemon. It also illustrated some of the specifics of security complexes, which 'emphasize the interdependence of rivalry as well as that of shared interests'(Buzan 2009: 160).

There was therefore serious potential for tensions between the two small emirates and the vast kingdom. As Badalyan remarked:

> Transportation routes affect and alter regional security dynamics. Pipelines that could have promoted peaceful outcomes are in fact facilitating greater tension. (Badalyan 2011: 1)

There is never any guarantee that a pipeline route will appease tensions or exacerbate them. Yet, in the Dolphin Energy case, a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the UAE and Qatar in 1998 was immediately followed by several attempts to resolve the remaining border disputes between the project stakeholders.

> In May 1999, Oman and the UAE signed an agreement to demarcate their border at Umm Zummul, where the borders of Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE converge. A month later, Qatar and Saudi Arabia agreed to mark their 60-km border culminating in a signed accord in March 2001, followed by an Oman-UAE accord in 2003 to settle ambiguities that had existed since the colonial era. (Ali 2010: 12)

While violence continued unabated in the neighbouring kingdom, the Dolphin Energy project seemed to stimulate a co-operative attitude between Arabs themselves and with western partners. Ali (2010) assumes that this is what pipelines do: they energise peace, and stimulate regional co-operation.

iii. Security dynamics at sea

In spite of these positive steps taken on land, the route followed by the underwater pipeline linking Ras Laffan to Taweelah was overlooked and its potential consequences for political disputes disregarded.

The underwater layout of the pipeline was a risky political move, but Qatar and the UAE arrogantly dismissed its potential consequences, confident that they would be able to manage Saudi political sensitivities through a typical deployment of Arab diplomacy,

made of public allegiances, flamboyant visits of Royals, soft and reassuring speeches about GCC solidarity and lavish ceremonies complete with sumptuous exchanges of gifts.

As a contributor to the GSN remarks:

> Through some analysts believe the Dolphin pipeline does not cross the tip of Saudi Arabia's claimed offshore interest interests zone in lower Gulf waters, there is no exact delineation of exactly how far Saudi Waters extend before they are cut short by the converging UAE and Qatari offshore interest zones. (GSN: 9 April 2010)

The other regional worry came, of course, from the northern side of the Persian Gulf. The commonality of the North (Pars) field between Iran and Qatar being an obvious area of tension. There was a fear that Iran would menace the project or, as a minimum, object loudly to it, and use it as an excuse to carryout naval attacks against the Dol-1 and Dol-2 platforms. A naval security system, or shield, was put in place, but Iran never seemed to have any interest in disrupting the project. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was at the time in the process of a rapprochement with Iran:

> Since the election of Muhammad Khatami in 1997, there have been distinct signs of a Saudi-Iranian rapprochement. There have been visits by senior officials of each county in the other's capital, during which fraternal Islamic relations and a desire for mutual co-operation were pledged. (Eilts 2006: 233)

The traditional regional atmosphere of traditional Arab rivalry, was then, amazingly benign, and unthreatening before the first sod was turned on the project in Ras Laffan industrial city in 2005.

iv. *Identifying domestic forces: Qatar and the UAE*

The economic reasons behind the project have been clearly established. The UAE were, in the early 2000's, in desperate need of gas to satisfy their political and economical objectives. Qatar seemed to harbour an overabundance of this commodity and the interests of the countries coincided. A real spirit of co-operation, spearheaded by incredible profits, was being developed in these years and traditional Arab rivalries were ignored or at least minimised. It was clear though, that in the partnership, the Emiratis were in charge, and that Qataris would see a limit to their managerial ambitions. The

Emirati general manager who was assigned in Doha in 2007 is still in place today, almost a decade later.

The ways physical forces are used to threaten, or protect, a pipeline are often indicative of the relationship between the project and the population, since local communities rarely support pipeline projects. As Ali rightly highlights:

> Pipeline construction is often seen as an intrusion into personal, communal, or national spaces, thus becoming a subject of controversy for citizens, activists and representatives of local communities. (Ali 2010: 7)

Communities often resent the intrusion, and the real or imagined benefits which pipeline stakeholders are thought to receive from it create a bad feeling. This resentment creates a breeding ground, often exploited by activists, ethnic or tribal community leaders bent on advancing their own agendas. If ignored, this resentment can easily turn into violent action.

Yet, in the Dolphin Energy project, no countervailing forces, opposition movements, or external threats to the project could be identified. When compared to the dangers surrounding industrial projects in Saudi Arabia during the same period, this absence of threat was almost unbelievable for the observer I was.

This does not mean that no such forces existed. There might have been political militants unhappy with the turn of the events, with the association of Arab and western powers, but the Qatari and Emirati authorities were threat-conscious and unafraid to address these issues with determination. Furthermore, the population had too much to lose, financially, to turn their backs on their governments. An infiltration of militants from Saudi Arabia to Qatar or the UAE was not impossible, but the UAE and Qatar controlled their borders and their visitors with an iron fist. [9]

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[9] As an example, I learned in a conversation that the brother of the Palestinian PA to our American GM during the project phase (2005-7), was preventively and systematically arrested, before every state visit of any foreign dignitary in Qatar, Arab or not.

v. Integrating cultural influence

In the Gulf area, religion is the major cultural demarcation line. And while Bahrain and KSA hold a distrusted Shia minority, Qatar and UAE are both Sunni monarchies with no noticeable Shia minority in their midst. Relations between the two countries have shown up-and-downs, and soured recently with regard to the support by the new emir of Qatar for the Muslim Brotherhood, but back in 2005, the relationship between the two emirates was good.

In a region where a zero-sum game is a historical and cultural tradition, and where issues of prestige are central, relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia were more complicated. Riyadh in the early 2000's was not looking favourably at the independent foreign policy of Sheikh Hamad, the rapprochement sought by Qatar towards Iran, its support to the Muslim Brotherhood, the uncontrollable political line followed by Al-Jazeera TV programmes (initially privately funded by the Emir himself), to name a few. These insolences, perceived by Riyadh as hardly tolerable, created a serious axis of tension between Riyadh and Doha, the first one competing for maintaining the status quo, the latter intent on defending their own political interests on the international scene. The Riyadh tolerance threshold appeared volatile and could be displaced one way or another with little or no notice. The relationship between different GCC leaderships was played in a typical Arab diplomatic manner, not always intelligible for external observers.

To conclude, a correct assessment of the forces can help in understanding the capabilities and cultural idiosyncrasies that can shape the future, and are crucial to an understanding of the potential threats facing the project. Indicators and subsequent scenarios may not always materialise but, a good assessment of forces helps make more reasonable predictions, although a flexible approach is necessary when new indicators replace invalid, obsolete or unsuitable ones. In most cases:

> The analyst's prediction will not come true because the customer will act on the intelligence to change the predicted outcome to a more favourable one. (Clark 2007: 195)

But to observe the application of forces, indicators must be determined.

b. Indicators

i. Open source information sufficient to create indicators

For the private security analyst working on pipeline security, an important question is whether the open source information can provide enough data to generate relevant indicators? As Hartwell, who had served as an analyst first in the MoD in London and then in the private sector, confided:

> I have worked in two different environments. One where I had access to covert intelligence and now I work in an environment where I have only access to overt information. The process you go through is fairly identical, although the information might be different in actual fact, because information is only as good as the sources they come from. That is applicable to every source of analysis you do and there is a perception that intelligence information is weighted much more importantly than other sources, which should not be always the case. As an analyst, you try to build the big picture and intelligence information is one part of that. If you take that away, I think you can still build a fairly accurate picture. (Hartwell, interview: 19 May 2011)

In the previous phase, the analyst has completed a study of forces. These forces, political, physical and socio-cultural, frame the present and suggest indications of how this present could develop. Good or bad, it will probably not materialise as such, because the customer, as well as other stakeholders, will act upon it before it reaches its logical outcome, which evolves permanently.

To ensure that indicators lead towards plausible outcomes, the analyst should look for convergent but also divergent indicators, that analysts call anomalies. If several can be found, the outcome, or scenario, should be revised and adjusted. If only one or two are found, the anomaly should not be discarded, but kept in store in the analyst toolbox, since these divergences may result from some redirection of the target dynamics, such as internal dissensions in one of the political units, or the result of political tensions in groups of interests, that reflect possible changes in power relationships and may resurface at a later stage.

ii. *Indicators are time and phase related*

Indicators are also linked to the stage of a project. Pipeline ventures traditionally comprise six stages: (1) political negotiation and choice of partners; (2) financing arrangements; (3) route suggestion; (4) project preparation and implementation; (5) construction; and then (6) operation and maintenance. Risk indicators will differ for each stage.

The analyst should first be able to frame the analysis within the project stage, which will prioritise threats above others, observe them from a RCR perspective, understand the components of the situation by assessing power and cultural issues, and list the threats the project could face at each specific stage from a Reflexive Cultural Realism standpoint.

iii. *Indicators are prioritised*

Regarding intelligence and warning analyses, both Grabo (2004) and Khalsa (2004) recommend prioritising indicators. Indicators do not have an equal value or impact. In a pipeline case study, this impact also differs according to the stage of development of the pipeline, because some indicators carry more importance at some stages than they might at others. For example, during the initial negotiations, discussions, or even rumour of discussions, between a local partner and a rival group of investors sends worrying signals about the government's loyalty to the pipeline venture, and should be ranked as high priority, while instability incidents in a region crossed by the pipeline at a later stage could be deemed disturbing but not crucial in phase 1. Conversely, if happening just before the construction phase of the project, they should be given high priority.

iv. *Indicators are both qualitative and quantitative*

Depending on the nature of the questions asked by the customer about the target, indicators could be either quantitative or qualitative, and most of the time are both. Quantitative indicators are those that can be counted or can be expressed in figures and numbers. Qualitative indicators can also be turned into figures for the possible use in any kind of risk equation, but in that case the number is an expression of a feeling, and not real quantitative measurements.

Many elements in a pipeline project bow to quantification. The pipe itself, its diameter, its length, its production rate, its route, the distance between pumping stations, the number of people deployed to protect it, the identification of people and groups that may oppose it. Physical forces reflect power and are quantifiable. Yet, those forces are only one part of the equation. A constructivist and cultural perspective should drive the identification and quantification of forces but also help measure the influence on these forces of qualitative value of ideas, beliefs, myths and other elements that frame the thinking of communities and their leadership and predispose them towards action.

v. *Indicators are theoretically informed*

All the previous information about indicators does not add real value for the customer unless these indicators are theoretically selected and theoretically answered. Indicators about possible actions of a force (through their agents) must be seen in terms of their natural quest for more power, the tools at their disposal to reach their objectives, and the cultural leeway to implement these objectives. To the open source analyst, collecting all available information in the media, not only mainstream but also online, and focus on any declaration, article or propaganda should provide a feeling about the mindsets of stakeholders in the project, their supporters and their adversaries. Propaganda should not be despised, or discarded because, as Grabo remarked: 'Propaganda reflects concerns. Propaganda is a very useful barometer of how concerned the country's leadership is about particular issues.'(Grabo 2004: 91)

Compiling such indicators provides a framework to clarify the objectives of the groups studied, but should not prevent the analyst from developing, during his research, a taste for any event, tangible (action) or intangible (declaration, but also rumour or private confidential private information), even apparently distant, that could impact the project.

c. Variables

Changes in forces, in personnel, in the direction of any of the elements that have helped build up the analysis, at any moment, but also in atmosphere, personal relations, will have an effect on these events, modify the projection and/or forecast and must be monitored closely by the analyst. Variables are one of the major paradoxes of security analysis. As the historian Stanford argued:

> The paradox is that human actions are intended to make changes in an already changing universe; yet they can be planned only on the assumption that everything else remains the same. But of course, it does not. (Stanford 1994: 197)

Indeed, the analyst needs to apply a RCR reading grid to a permanently evolving situation and try to envision some scenarios on the basis of elements that will not stay valid for long. Like bias, this state of things must be understood and accepted.

i. The motivation

In the Dolphin Energy pipeline case study, the motivation behind the project was the conjunction of the UAE existential need for natural gas and the overabundance of such commodity in the Qatar North field. The UAE and Qatar, could see political advantages in this project, to develop new relationships based on some sense of solidarity for the two emerging emirates, clearly establish some political independence vis-à-vis the Saudi regional heavyweight, move the energy centre away from KSA towards the Persian Gulf, with the possibility of a business future inclined the towards the Indian subcontinent, in high demand, at a later stage. As Ali highlighted:

> It was also part of a broader political effort by the UAE to strengthen ties with other smaller Gulf States to balance Saudi Arabia, the dominant Gulf power. (Ali 2010: 3)

Establishing the political motivations behind the project would have helped the analyst to anticipate that KSA would not see positively this project, decided without their consent. Pipeline strategy is a power strategy and regional power strategy helps apprehend potential contentious issues. Ali highlighted the importance of the political factor when he remarked that:

The Qatari government enjoys enormous demand for its gas, and its decision to pursue a project with the UAE – and at a lower pricing regimen than other competitors – signals that the government considered regional politics in its decision to take on the project. (Ali 2010:13)

Therefore, the first question the analyst should answer when measuring the security of a target (in our case the Dolphin Energy pipeline) is: what political agendas is the pipeline serving? Answers are often obvious: secure alternative sources of supply, provide employment and revenue for their population, etc. But their political corollaries must not be minimised: Motivation to avoid political blackmail, displace the balance of regional and local power, and obtain some leeway in regional politics usually ranks high in the decision to be part of a pipeline joint-venture. The Dolphin Energy project provided the UAE an opportunity to bandwagon with Qatar and to reinforce their leadership position with southern Gulf States, and appear regionally as alternative leaders to Saudi Arabia.

ii. The route

The route is a combination of strategic and tactical concerns. It is a geographical projection of power and the Dolphin Energy und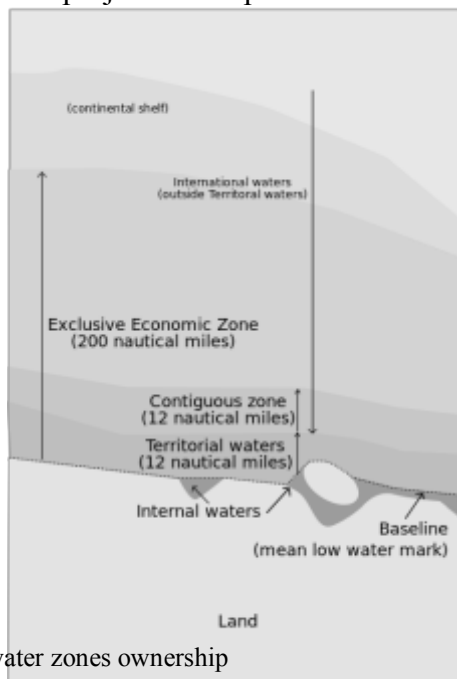erwater and land pipelines perfectly illustrate the point. The route of the underwater pipeline was designed to be as distant as possible from the Saudi Arabia eastern shores, to avoid claims of ownership, or at least of trespassing, by Saudi authorities. In international waters, all states have the freedom to fish, navigate, overfly, lay cables and pipelines and do research. But where these international waters begin is also a matter of interpretation. The United Nations 'Part V - Exclusive Economic Zone, Articles 55, 56', Law of the Sea, defines the different water zones ownership as seen on figure 7.

Figure 7: UN water zones ownership

An exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is a sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea over which a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind. It stretches from

the baseline out to 200 nautical miles (approximately 370 km) from its coast. The term does not include either the territorial sea or the continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical miles' limit.

 The difference between the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone is that the first confers full sovereignty over the waters, whereas the second is merely a 'sovereign right' which refers to the coastal state's rights below the surface of the sea.

A look at figure 1 shows that the entirety of the underwater pipeline falls within the EEZ of Saudi Arabia, while it also falls within the EEZ of Qatar and of the UAE. There was therefore a potential for dispute. This, for the analyst using the RCR reading grid was a warning that, should the spirit of co-operation of the project suddenly wane, serious issues could suddenly develop. Although some analysts consider that:

> The Dolphin route looks uncontroversial given the current delineation of oilfields in the offshore areas, and that Saudi Arabia is using the pipeline to gain leverage in ongoing disputes over the contested areas. (GSN: 9 April 2010)

An analyst using the reflexive cultural realist approach would have raised the possibility of this issue being exploited at some stage by Saudi Arabia for political gain.

iii. The financing

Items of information regarding the financing of a project can be difficult to access. For the Dolphin Energy project the financial equation was straightforward. Major international banks financed the project, and financial responsibilities were split along the lines of company shares. Qatar Petroleum, on the basis of the property rights of the natural gas extracted from its sea zone, was not part of the financing, but was involved in the management of the gas supply, received the lion's share of the sales, and was due to inherit the whole structure (plants, pipelines and offshore platforms) after 25 years of operation. The RCR approach, by analysing the financial components of the project, can help portray a balance of power between partners and how the evolution of this power relationship could be monitored.

iv. Supply sources

A pipeline is a linear asset, like a railway. The difference is that, in order to operate, it needs to be connected to a source. In the Dolphin Energy case study, the supply sources were limited to Dol-1 and Dol-2, the two offshore platforms in the Qatar North field. There was always the risk of Iran meddling with the operation of these platforms, and this risk is still present today.

v. Possible controversial aspects

As can be seen from these examples, competition in energy supplies and routes is fierce, and pipeline strategy appears to be often guided by a zero-sum game principle. The creation of a new pipeline will often be detrimental to an existing one, and reflect changes in government strategy. Analysts should be conversant with all existing pipelines routes that may suffer from the emergence of a new distribution competitor and work out a list of warning indicators arising from existing competition and / or alternative projects. They should monitor all the potential political threats to the project and analyse their nuisance capability. The cultural aspect must guide the analyst as well. For example, an Arabs second nature to deal, negotiate and barter, systematically, to try and gain a better deal elsewhere, even after having signed a memorandum of agreement, must be seen from a cultural perspective. For Arabs, it is not seen as betrayal but as a manifestation of their superior business acumen. Generally speaking, such peripheral negotiations will have no impact on the pipeline project, but the analyst must constantly keep monitoring such events at each level, from the global to the local, and anticipate what their relevance may be in order to inform the corporate customer about possible changes.

6. Stage 4: Scenarios regarding the security of the land pipeline in the UAE

One can see that the situation in Qatar and the UAE was very different from the Saudi context, where a fight to the death between jihadi militants and the Saudi monarchy was on going, unrelenting. As Ali remarked,

> The major obstacle traditionally to pipeline construction is to persuade investors to support pipeline ventures in areas vulnerable to political instability and security risk. (Ali 2010: 1)

In this case, investors were at the forefront of the process (Mubadala Abu Dhabi with a 51% stake in the project), countries crossed and served by the pipeline were politically peaceful, opposition to the project by antagonistic political units almost non-existent.

a. From indicators' list to scenario

The interest of establishing an indicators' list is that when some indicators materialise, they point towards pre-established scenarios. Indicators selected on the basis of a Reflexive Cultural Realism approach would have reflected relationships of power in a specific cultural environment. The resulting scenarios are logical evolutions of political trends that have been previously analysed. There is a logical thread that unfolds from the definition of forces, to the list of indicators and the scenarios that all stem from a proper evaluation of the operating forces. Although indicators and scenarios can (and will) be acted upon after each singular event, convergent or divergent, they are still submitted to the logic of politics. The cultural aspect will be crucial in the approach, and may sometimes lead the analyst towards erroneous conclusions. As Mearsheimer wrote:

> Those who venture to predict, (…) should therefore proceed with humanity, take care not to claim unwarranted confidence, and admit that later hindsight will undoubtedly reveal surprises and mistakes. (Mearsheimer 1990: 9)

Bos, speaking at an analyst level, admitted the same:

> I think we have to be honest and humble and so that we are clear the fact that we can't predict the future. However, what we can do is, try to depict context and circumstances that will help our clients come up with the right decision making tools, so should a crisis arise, they are prepared and they understand the parameters and dynamics and they know how to react. (Bos, interview, 1 June 2011)

In this specific case study, some of the indicators figuring on the list should have reflected the irritation of Saudi Arabia regarding the underwater pipeline, when in August 2006, Riyadh wrote to the financiers of the Dolphin project to object to the pipeline's route (GSN 874: 9 April 2010). The analyst should have created an indicator's list including official complaints, border and naval incidents and diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Analysts, provided they had been made aware of developments, would have monitored such events closely and suggested scenarios, going from diplomatic incidents

up to military confrontation, (that indeed occurred between the UAE and Saud navy in April 2010). The frequency and the nature of these indicators would have provided indications about developing scenarios. Regarding the land pipeline, there was no specific indication that the integrity of the pipeline could be threatened by regional political groups. There was a general feeling shared by the populations of UAE and Oman that that the pipeline was rendering a positive service to the countries. Yet, the analyst could have listed indicators focusing on the discontent of Bedouins, incidents in villages, with the police, as well as the possibility of thefts motivated by criminal gains. These were mainly the major threats that could impact the flow of gas in the UAE, but they were minor in nature. Such indicators would have pointed towards an indication of neglect by the company and would have triggered a reaction from the Dolphin Energy management in the UAE.

7. Stage 5: Establish the probability of scenario occurrence

A sound knowledge about pipeline security must be the starting point of the research.

For example, experience shows that people living in the immediate vicinity, normally do commit pipeline attacks. From a tactical standpoint, this makes perfect sense: locals know the pipeline, its design, the measures of protection put in place. They are best placed to conceal the preparation and execution of an attack. The analyst, when trying to anticipate such threats should study the immediate social and political environment, and apply the Reflexive Cultural Realism reading grid to articulate answers to common sense questions. The most obvious ones would be in those lines:

- How many regions is the pipeline crossing into?
- Are there solid tribal issues on the route?
- Have tribal leaders been approached during the research phase and their attitude analysed?
- What are the plausible threats and vulnerabilities for the portion of pipe the customer is supposed to develop and maintain?
- Will expatriates be deployed on this portion? At what stage? What security risks are involved? And what protection could be deployed to protect them?

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These questions are practical and at the same time need to be theoretically supported. In the Dolphin Energy case study, these questions were asked and the answers were straightforward and uncomplicated: The pipeline from Taweelah to Fujairah and Oman was crossing two stable and peaceful countries, the UAE and Oman. The tribal issues, en route, were not based on political issues but rather cultural ones, (Bedouins resenting the intrusion of the pipeline in their camel herds grazing areas). There were no tribal leaders claiming political status or challenging the existing status quo.

Furthermore, HSE[10] Emirati employees at Dolphin Energy had done a great job of touring the communities along the pipeline routes, sitting with elders, explaining the advantages of the gas project for the communities, and making sure that there was a way for these communities to address potential grievances. This excellent upstream work explained, in part, why no politically inspired incidents were experienced during the installation and early operations of the pipeline. Bedouins, not inclined to enter discussions with authorities, were much more difficult to approach, but their capacity for nuisance was manageable.

Because the pipeline could not be used politically to reinforce demands or to blackmail the government, the protection of the pipeline was conceived in a very unobtrusive way. Several teams would patrol a section of the pipeline, returning to the same point every three days on average, checking that the pipeline itself had not been attacked and checking the integrity of block valve stations. The Dolphin Energy management had adopted a sound approach to address and prevent grievances escalating into potentially damaging political claims. The error Dolphin management made, from an RCR perspective was to have neglected the political aspect of things at a regional level and ignored the impact of the Dolphin project on the regional balance of power. The UAE thought they could enforce the Dolphin project away from Saudi hegemony, showing some independence towards Riyadh, a move Saudi Arabia could not take kindly to. The issue of border disputes, left unfinished in 1974, gave some leverage to Saudi Arabia to complain about the Dolphin project. Several indicators emanating from this situation should have

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[10] Health, Safety and Environment.

populated the indicators list opening up towards conflicting scenarios between the two countries.

8. Stages 6 & 7: Deliver the report and archive

The report I submitted to the Dolphin management in 2007 was limited to the task I had been given: to survey the land pipeline in the UAE and propose practical solutions to maintain the integrity of the pipeline and its assets. It was a consultant's report and not the work of an analyst. A serious analysis, supported by a reflexive cultural realist approach would have been rejected. In fact, it would have been blocked by my immediate superior. The Arab management would have felt extremely angered if I had dared depict tensions, rivalries and Arab antagonisms and their possible consequences to the project. Culturally, Arabs are extremely sensitive (and defensive) about everything related to political security, and a security practitioner should confine himself within the limits of CCTV cameras and fibre optic cabling. Furthermore, at Dolphin Energy, strict rules applied regarding the maximum length of reports, not as stringent as MoD rules, but writing a report of more than 4 pages was unthinkable. The report I delivered was technical, in line with expectations. It is due to the cultural specificities of the Persian Gulf that such reflection could not be discussed with the management, and I think that, a decade later, the outcome of the survey would be probably identical. Yet if this analysis had been ordered by one of the western partners, it would have warned them about the potential incidents that could, at any time, hamper the project continuation. As an illustration of these tensions, in March 2010,

> A naval clash between Saudi and UAE vessels were reported, with an exchange of fire and the detention of (the) Saudi crew for several days. The incident has been seen as part of a long simmering Saudi-Emirati dispute over the Dolphin pipeline which brings Qatari gas to the UAE and Oman. (GSN: 9 April 2010)

Conclusion

What makes this case study interesting is how the positive political environment at the time of the study determined its outcome. Although economic factors obviously played a major role, the political aspect of the project is what made it appear, then, as a resounding success. As Ali, who visited Dolphin Energy in 2006, argued:

> In ascertaining the rationale for the Dolphin Project, economic factors were necessary but not sufficient to make it happen. Political considerations – including expectations that the pipeline could serve as a basis for strengthening co-operation – were also instrumental. (Ali 2010: 13)

Yet, with time, tensions did appear, escalating sometimes to military clashes (naval skirmish in 2010). In this case study, I have used the RCR approach to demonstrate how such a theory, supported by a simple method, could have helped the analyst's customer understand how threats could develop and which form they could take.

Traditional security challenges for pipelines were first discussed. I explained the circumstances that led to my recruitment, and why the western partners of the projects, Oxy and Total, were concerned about the issue of security that had been completely overlooked by their Gulf partners. I then demonstrated that a reflexive cultural realist approach would have confirmed that no major threat to the project was to be expected at a domestic level, but that the regional level could be impacted by a possible change of attitude by the Iranian Republic and a growing feeling of irritation by Saudi Arabia towards the growing political and economic ambitions shown by the UAE and Qatari leaderships. I showed that none of the traditional political rivalries between political groups or units at a micro-level were present in the region where the pipeline was positioned.

This was demonstrated by applying the RCR reading grid at the three levels of analysis, placing the project in a timeline, a cultural environment and then applying the different requirements of the RCR approach: the definitions of forces (political, physical and cultural), the subsequent designing of indicators, and the suggestion of outcomes based on a logical development of forces in a culturally unfamiliar context. From these solid foundations, I suggested how the RCR approach could have helped establish the probability of occurrence of scenarios, while simplifying the analysis by focusing on a

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constructivist image of power developed in a specific cultural environment.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

1. A summary of the study

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the contribution that theories of International Relations could make to the analytical skills of private security analysts.

The practical objective of the research was to improve the analytical skills of the private security analyst working for multinational corporations in volatile and politically unstable environments. But it also targeted the particular audience of those security consultants deployed in such areas, who are given security analysis as part of their brief. These practitioners are rarely academics but often belong to the ex-military type and may not always be equipped with the knowledge and skills sufficient to produce acceptable analyses for their management. They may need my recommendations more than the academic analysts. I have been in their place and shared their probable frustration about their lack of a method supported by theoretical guidelines. I took up international relations studies on the intuitive feeling that understanding international politics would make me a better security practitioner and an acceptable analyst. To achieve this, I needed to have a clearer picture of the relationship between political analysis and security forecasting and so I decided to orientate my research in three directions.

The first one consisted of using my personal experience as a security practitioner and part-time analyst, with twelve consecutive years of security experience in the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Bahrain) to identify analytical shortcomings shared by many analysts and consultants. During this period of direct involvement in corporate security in a Middle-Eastern context, I had time to think about the concept of security risks, threats and vulnerabilities and the importance of adopting a political approach to make sense of what appeared sometimes as senseless actions by the target persons or groups we were observing.

The second axis of effort was to read most of the existing academic and vocational literature about security risk analysis, warning intelligence, counter-terrorism studies, as

well as literature and studies about forecasting methods and techniques. This reading started prior to the thesis, as I have been studying security in an industrial and corporate context for more than a decade. Before I engaged in this research, I was familiar with the vast amount of professional literature dealing with risk assessments, of which the threat evaluation is an essential part.

As a third avenue of research, I opted for a qualitative research method in the form of semi-structured interviews with professional security analysts, British and French, whose daily duties consist of analysing and monitoring security situations in areas of tension where MNCs deploy assets and personnel to operate industrial projects. I interviewed thirteen security analysts, in London, Paris and Dubai and their contribution brought real-life experience to what, I realise, could have been perceived otherwise as an academic exercise. I discerned patterns in the answers I received from my interviewees, which all pointed towards an unexpected direction that contradicted two assumptions that had guided me through the initial research process; (1) that Realism as a theory of international relations was the most appropriate theory to understand human political behaviour; and (2) that the main value of an analysis was its capability to be predictive. In international politics, as in corporate security, understanding a situation is not enough, envisioning possible developments is what makes the difference between a report and a relevant analysis. Giving tools to the decision maker is what corporate security is really all about.

In chapter 3, I explored forecasting principles and existing techniques and discovered that, if forecasting principles had been well established in intelligence circles, most techniques had been developed and evaluated in academic or think-tank environments and lacked real-life contribution. I came to realise that the domain of professional forecasters was mainly economics, and they had devoted little interest to political and security forecasting. I wondered whether these forecasting techniques could be used to improve the skills of the private security analyst and to make their security analyses more relevant by being predictive. I explored the possible connections between these techniques and the tasks traditionally entrusted to analysts. I reviewed the best known of them, judgemental methods, Delphi technique, role-playing and game theory, and realised that all of them were permeated by heuristic biases, reasoning flaws and cultural

ignorance. The conclusion I reached was that none of these techniques, in spite of their appealing power, were acceptable tools for the analyst for three main reasons: (1) because, as products of the Cold War, which essentially measured a balance of military power, they are now obsolete; (2) the second reason to discard them is that they overwhelmingly privilege emotions over reasoning and reflect unconsciously the cultural biases of their initiators; and (3) all these techniques are complex and their contents collected in a apparent theoretical vacuum. One of my assumptions was that no analysis could be built in a theoretical vacuum without running the risk of being the reflection of cultural bias. I concluded this study of techniques by saying that a theoretically informed approach was necessary to make security situations intelligible.

The following chapter (chapter 4) was therefore dedicated to finding a way to frame a method within a theoretical framework. After having established the needs of the corporate customer in terms of security, I then evaluated the validity of my initial assumption; that Realism could act as the pillar that would sustain the theoretical approach and provide the tools for the decision maker. I listed the shortcomings Realism has been accused of and proposed that Realism be supported by other theories of IR to become more relevant and more modern. Constructivism appeared as an obvious prime candidate to reinforce the almost philosophical validity of Realism, because of the sociological perspective it brings to traditional IR theories. The world of international security is not anymore about sheer power, but about how power is socially constructed, understood and used. Although, one must be conscious that Realism and constructivism deal with different aspects of social activities, they complement each other and this provides the analyst with new insights about how security issues are constructed.

Yet, I was still under the impression that the cultural dimension was missing in this constructivist-realist approach. I know, by experience, that one of the main concerns of the corporate decision maker is that they must deploy assets and people in places perceived as dangerous and unstable and that the decisions they need to take are a constant source of anxiety. The private security analyst, as a specialist in a geographical area combined with their political, social and cultural idiosyncrasies, must provide their customer with the key to understanding what can happen over there; social reaction to

stimuli, that are often incomprehensible and mysterious to western observers. The key to this understanding is cultural analysis, as a way to grasp how power is conceived and used by political entities that can be considered as unreliable in their behaviour and irrational in their decision-making process. Nothing, of course, if farther from the truth, and it is the analysts' task to make situations and behaviours intelligible to their customer. Once I incorporated cultural analysis into the constructivist-realism theory that would form the basis of the reflection. I considered I had now reached an acceptable theoretical perspective. I called this theory *Reflexive Cultural Realism*.

In chapter 5, I demonstrated that Reflexive Cultural Realism was not a theory of international relations, but a theory of security and that its fields of application covered the global, regional and domestic spheres of political action.

I explained how Reflexive Cultural Realism would feed the analysis, by providing a political forecast under the form of plausible scenarios to be acted upon. I selected the necessary components to create an informed approach to security analysis. I emphasized how driving forces, and their corollaries, would lead to scenarios as the traditional outcomes of security analysis. I explained which types of scenarios would best answer the questions posed by the customer, and warned against the traditional intellectual challenges that plague the objectivity of such approaches. I then demonstrated how using a reflexive cultural realist approach would significantly reduce bias and present the customer with an as-impartial-as-reasonably-practicable vision of any security situation.

To make this theoretical approach more effective, I suggested in chapter 6 a 7-step method, driven by and incorporating the RCR theory, which would guide the analyst through an informed process, where steps and content are both driven by a theoretically-informed approach, and where all levels of analysis, from the global to the domestic, are considered.

In chapters 7 and 8, I developed two case studies in order to evaluate the validity and relevance of both the theory and the method 'in context'. Both examples are located in the same geographical area and during approximately the same time period. In both cases, I was the highest-ranking security person on the project, which gave me access to enough

security information to feed the method. In both cases I was tasked with a security project, (ensuring the security of a pipeline and preparing an evacuation plan), that involved some security analysis. I believe that these two case studies proved, satisfactorily, that the RCR approach would have provided an appropriate response to each security problem, and that it would have been an improvement on what was delivered at the time. As such it fulfilled the initial objective, of improving the analytical capability of private security analysts working for corporate customers deploying workforces in degraded environments.

2. An interpretation of the findings of this study

When I started this study, my main objective was to improve the way security practitioners approach security analysis and to make their work more reliable and indisputable by resting them against theories of IR, applied to specific security situations in culturally different environments. As already mentioned, my interest in the topic was the result of twelve years as a security practitioner in the middle-east and my writing (and reading) of dozens of risk assessments for corporate and industrial projects, of which the threat analysis constituted the foundation from which mitigations measures are built. My dissatisfaction with the way existing security methodologies were used and structured triggered my decision to address this particular topic. For all these years, I worked with security practitioners, who drafted threat assessments of an inconsistent quality, often reflecting cultural bias, value judgements and ignorance of local values and beliefs, and security analysts in steel and glass towers in western capitals whose concerns seemed quite distant the concerns of MNCs corporate hierarchy deploying workforces abroad with the feeling that things could be improved. My studies in international relations, at MA level, convinced me that theories of IR could provide a theoretical framework to improve such skills and I commenced this thesis with the conviction that private security analysts would confirm this intuition. The result was not the one I expected and challenged my assumptions.

a. Discrepancy between my assumptions and the findings of the interviews

The most surprising result of my interviews with private security analysts was that none of them seemed to show any interest in IR theories that they had studied at university.

When asked about what they thought about the potential value of Realism, or any other theory of IR for that matter, as an explanatory tool for their work as an analyst, Blit, summarising the thought of all interviewees, affirmed:

> When we do our analysis, we do not say: Well, I am going to use this theory. We do not have any such idea when we analyse. Unconsciously, perhaps, the idea of power is present, but this is not conscious. We work according to logic and deduction, rather than according to (what) *Realism says so*. (Blit, interview: 25 June 2013)

After a period of shock, the result of the identical attitude from all analysts interviewed reinforced my conviction that bias and prejudice were so deeply ingrained in the analysts' mind, that their rejection of my assumptions would not refute the validity of my research. On the contrary: it became my responsibility to demonstrate that theory was needed to analyse, and that the existing theories of IR could perform the job. I was facing a dual intellectual challenge. On the one hand, my work with theories of IR and their potential contribution to corporate security advanced satisfactorily, and on the other hand, I had to consider the findings collected during the interviews. The key to the unacknowledged, intellectual attitude shared by analysts was to understand what framed their logic. If I were to successfully defend the reflexive cultural realist theory, I had to justify the deconstruction of the analysts reading grid. The question of the validity of their answers, due the limited number of the analysts interviewed, should be posed and will be discussed in section three of this chapter. The analysts, if their number was limited, were interviewed in three different countries and were of different nationalities. I had to assume that most western European analysts would share the same approach towards a theory informed analysis. Two explanations to their attitude could be advanced: (1) that the need for an external generic explanation theory was rejected because another deeply ingrained intellectual model, an interpretation of a reality based on a set of culturally and socially constructed underpinning assumptions, was already established. What they called, *the context,* becomes the interpretation of this set of values assumed by the analyst to be universal in nature, and (2) another possible explanation is that theories of international relations aim to explain the relationship of power between nation-states, a level where the private security analyst seldom ventures.

     b.   The relationship between analysis and forecast

It was one of my initial assumptions that, to be relevant, a security analysis had to be predictive. The literature about intelligence and warning (Clark, Khalsa and Grabo 2004), was very clear about the necessity to anticipate developments in order to provide decision makers with sets of scenarios to be acted upon. As the interviews revealed, this idea was not immediately evident to the analysts. Perhaps they were worried they would be accused of charlatanism, or they misunderstood my questions, but the relationship between analysis and forecast was not obvious to many of them. Yet, all admitted that some sort of forecast was necessary, if the analysis was to be of value to the customer. But the techniques of forecasting were of no interest to those who had heard about them, and the others had no intention of spending time to study them. This is where, I thought, my review of the principle techniques used in forecasting would add value, although, as Aron once said, 'there is no general theory of international relations comparable to the theory of economics' (1984: 102). I wanted to know whether techniques, used by professional forecasters, could be either used or adapted to political forecasting and security analysis. The idea of forecasting political events was always present in Realism, particularly structural Realism for obvious reasons, but because theories appeared of no interest to professional analysts I explored the possibility of incorporating forecasting techniques within a theoretical framework. The conclusion of my study on techniques proved disappointing. These techniques, born in the west in a typical configuration of western antagonisms, the Cold War, were marred by a structural bias that could not really be corrected. Game theory, role-playing and even the Delphi technique, all showed signs of structural flaws, irreconcilable with my objective of an impartial or objective approach to analysis.

This did not mean that all these techniques were to be rejected out of hand. Some, and particularly the Delphi technique, had been used extensively in the world of intelligence during the Cold War, but as Grabo wisely remarked:

> (The Delphi procedure) does not eliminate the tendencies of groups toward conformity, and it may encourage too many people to cast votes on subjects which they have not analyzed in depth. Since off-the-cuff judgements by those who have not examined all the evidence are (of) our major problems in warning, it is obvious that the technique should be applied with care in this forum. (Grabo 2004: 154)

The conclusion of my chapter on techniques almost eliminated them all as relevant tools for decision making. This was initially a surprise, but now that I have reached the conclusion of this study, it makes perfectly sense. The importance of the cultural aspect, in the Reflexive Cultural Realism, suggests that decisions and judgements taken by analysts sharing bias and the prejudices in the climate of opinion cannot provide a correct security analysis. This brings us naturally to the reflexive part of the theory.

c. Reflexivity as the safety net of the analyst

I have argued in this study that private security analysts need to be reflexive in their approach to analysis. Yet, I need to be completely honest about this statement, and admit that claiming reflexivity is probably one way to protect oneself from wrong judgements and possible misinterpretations of a situation. Perhaps it may be some kind of safety net to limit the responsibilities of the analyst towards their customer? Barkin remarked: 'The case for reflexivity in Realism has also been made a number of times recently, so much so that the literature has been referred to as reflexive Realism' (Barkin 2008: 11). Yet, there is nothing wrong with reflexivity, as the acknowledgement of the limits of the analyst's approach.

> (Reflexivity) entails recognition that one's analysis will inherently be biased to one's own perspectives, because that is the only perspective one can really know, and that one cannot claim certainty in the estimation of the thinking of adversaries or counterparts. It also entails recognition that, whether or not one aspires to value neutrality (or objectivity) in one (s) research, once cannot attain it. Reflexivity is, in a sense, a form of prudence as applied to analysis rather than to policy recommendation. And prudence is a core realist value. (Barkin 2008: 11)

Reflexivity can be seen as the safety net of the analyst, because no matter how competent and immersed in the culture of the others they are, they cannot embrace the different forces that act in the other's camp decision making chain, and have only a limited access to confidential information that often plays a crucial part in the other's decisions. Yet, by adopting a reflexive attitude, analysts can frame their analyses into a theoretical framework that will provide reasonable chances of deciphering complex security situations for their customer.

d. The contribution of Reflexive Cultural Realism to security studies

i. Reflexive Cultural Realism as a theory of security

My reflection about ways to improve the analytical skills of private security analysts serving customers deploying assets abroad in non-western cultures and often deteriorated environments led me to the elaboration of a theory I titled Reflexive Cultural Realism, which is, at the same time, a conjunction of existing theories of International Relations (Constructivism, Realism and cultural analysis), an intellectual approach and a method that provides analysts with an exploitable tool for examining such security situations. What makes this approach unique is its wide field of application. I argue that such approach can provide satisfactory results at all level of analysis, from the global to the domestic, provided coherent political units are defined and act as such in their area of influence. This is not a fanciful proposition since the relationship between Greek cities of the ancient world and the Italian cities of the Renaissance are often cited as examples of polities applying realist behaviours. These cities were not nation-states in the Westphalian sense, but they applied principles of Realism to the conduct of their external affairs. By covering the whole range of political entities, the RCR approach provides analysts with a theoretically-informed tool that enables them to interpret any security situation, even at the lowest political common denominator, in a logical and comprehensive approach.

This approach was not what I had in mind when I started the study. But it imposed itself on me by the logic of reasoning. The principles I found appealing in Realism were not eventually those that contributed most to the creation of the RCR theory. I began my reflection postulating that Realism was better armed than other theories of IR to anticipate the future (s), an idea I still support. But, reflection and research made it clear that the realist theory that I found myself intellectually closer to, Classical Realism, was the one that *did not* claim such capability to predict. Classical realists, more philosophers than political scientists, suggested prudence in politics, because human behaviours were essentially unpredictable. At that stage, Realism did not fulfil the hopes of providing comprehensive explanatory tools I first had in mind. Constructivism, by bringing to Classical Realism a sociological approach about the necessity to see the issue of power through a social scope, was the missing link I needed to move forward. Barkin was instrumental in clarifying the possibilities offered by a combination of Realism and Constructivism:

> The resulting synthesis is one that brings from classical realism a focus on power politics and on foreign policy and from constructivism a focus on, and a methodology for studying, the co-constitution of structures and agents. (Barkin 2010: 7)

My research about forecasting techniques highlighted the issue of biases, to the point of disqualifying them entirely as analytical tools. It became obvious to me that the cultural aspect of political/security analysis was central to a proper comprehension of any security equation. I explored the cultural aspect of politics, becoming familiar with the main texts and authors of Foreign Policy Decision Making and Foreign Policy Analysis. Although focused on decision making at an international level, these theories were instrumental in leading me towards adding a cultural element to security analysis. I studied their capacity to be used at all levels of political analysis and once satisfied that they were compatible with a constructivist-realist perspective, I was able to add an important and complementary piece of work to the theory I was building.

Through writing this thesis, I realised that the initial objective, namely to improve the analytical skills of security practitioners working in degraded environments, was reached by unforeseen paths. The theoretical perspective I eventually created establishes a satisfactory re-conceptualisation of an academic approach to security studies, seen from both an academic and a professional perspective. It allows analyses to reach a better forecasting reliability than through the simple use of scenarios. When compared to other methods of risk and threat assessments mentioned in this research, Reflexive Cultural Realism is unique in encompassing the notions of power and security in a culturally defined context. As such, Reflexive Cultural Realism has a unique place in theories of security.

ii. Reflexive cultural realism theory applied to corporate security

Reflexive Cultural Realism focuses on a specific area of security, that of professional analysts working for private consultancies and delivering security analyses to corporate customers deploying workforces abroad in difficult environments. This security niche encompasses the five major sectors of classical security studies suggested by Buzan in *People, States and Fear*; namely, political security, economic security, societal security, environmental security and military security, and as such can be considered a theory of

security. This was aptly demonstrated by the two case studies where the method using the Reflexive Cultural Realism reading grid showed that it added new analytical perspectives and provided significant results compared to the traditional approach to security threat and risk analysis. By resting on three complementary theories, (Constructivism, Realism and cultural analysis), Reflexive Cultural Realism, because of its robust realist pillar, is expressed within a classical intellectual framework towards security since it considers security 'as virtually synonymous with the accumulation of power… the more power actors can accumulate the more secure they will be.'[1] (Williams 2012: 6). Reflexive Cultural Realism, in its application, pays critical attention to how security is conceived, perceived and applied. Its application method, integrated into a seven-step approach, developed in chapter 6 of this thesis, provides both procedural guidance and a theoretical framework capable of driving to a satisfactory conclusion the analysis of any security situation in a culturally distinctive environment. Reflexive Cultural Realism theorises threats and risks and makes them the resultant of political agendas, both structural and individual, developed in particular cultural environments. It also provides a rational and effective way of building scenarios that transform the security analysis into a practical tool for decision making.

3. An assessment of the significance and validity of the findings

Reflexive Cultural Realism contributes to the field of security analysis in three significant ways. First, it demonstrates that selected theories of International Relations, when used correctly and methodically, can provide a robust tool to analyse security equations and fill the theoretical gap hidden behind the notion of context as the unique source of explanation.

Second it brings to the security equation an original perspective to traditional approaches by privileging the theoretical aspects of power and culture over that of context and great men personal interest. It postulates that the definition of the idea of context is the result of ingrained and implicit assumptions that result in culturally tainted perspectives and

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[1] Contrary to the second philosophy that sees security as based on emancipation, that is a concern with justice and the provision and human rights. (Williams 2012: 6)

that these perspectives are unable to grasp the entirety of a security situation in exogenous environments.

Third, it provides an innovative way, through its 7-step method, to build scenarios reflecting politically-driven agendas in particular social and cultural contexts, providing the corporate customer with a set of intelligible and possible futures that can be acted upon.

The scope of the study may appear limited because I focused on a very narrow security question, that of the private security analyst working for corporate customers deploying workforce in areas of instability and danger. These analysts and their customers share a western interpretation of reality which was at the origin of my motivation. It was for them, western analysts and corporate executives, that I developed this research, conscious of the relative difficulty for many analysts to anticipate events developing in far-off places where behaviours and reactions were often misread. I therefore claim the limitation of the scope as a positive determinant in the research.

I purposely chose to test my theory on two case studies, located in the same geographical area, and in the same period of time. The locations of the case study (Saudi Arabia and Qatar) correspond to the definition I gave of areas of application: areas of different cultures, where business ventures are common and the deployment of western workforces the norm. Because of the importance of the culture in the theory, case studies in other cultural areas (Central Asia or the Far East) would have yielded different results. Yet, Reflexive Cultural Realism would have taken into account the different cultural patterns and the 7-stage method would have posed the same relevant questions that would have been answered through a perhaps slightly different prism, but would have provided relevant answers to the customer's interrogations.

The strength of this theory, then, is that it takes on board the particular cultural aspects of politics, power and security. Case studies are 'a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program activity, event, activity, process…' (Creswell 2009:13), and it is this necessity to explore in depth that pushed me to select these two case studies where, as the highest security representative in the field, I benefited from being a privileged observer while being privy to information not rendered public at the time.

Last, my background is not in security analysis but in corporate security. It is quite a different field of activity and if some activities do overlap, that of risk assessment, for example, the traditional approach to security usually differs. However, the study has shown that private security analysts are increasingly confronted with pragmatic questions that tend to replace the need for the geopolitical analysis of yesteryear, and that the job of the analyst and that of the consultant tend to converge. In this evolving context, this limitation could be seen as an advantage by allowing fresh insight into a discipline that analysts and consultants will have to increasingly share in the future.

4. Suggestions for future research

The results of the study open the door for three areas of future research, among others. This section will provide recommendations for the following areas: (a) discussing a way to establish the relative value of culture and power in the RCR theory, (b) develop a scale to define words used in security threat analysis such as possible, plausible, probable and suggest a statistical equivalent. The starting point of this research could be Vellani's scale in *Strategic Security Management*, (c) develop the issue of *risk intelligence* initiated by Evans (2012), and suggest a way to measure statistically a level of confidence that would appear in the report with a corresponding scale and show the commitment of the analyst.

a. Establish the respective value of the different elements in the Reflexive Cultural Realism theory

Reflexive Cultural Realism has emphasized the importance of culture in political and security analysis. It has showed that its principles could apply, with effectiveness, at different levels of social and political interaction. It has postulated that cultural analysis was a determinant element of the theory. However, it failed to establish, satisfactorily, the relative importance of each part that composes the reflexive cultural realist approach. Of course, using the word reflexive allows the analyst to get out of the challenge by sidestepping the question. But this pirouette can only be a temporary escape. More research should be attempted to try and improve the ways to measure the ratio between culture and power, beliefs and decision making. Hoping to find a numerical way to measure such concepts would be again falling into the trap of believing that concepts can

be replaced by numerical figures. If this were the case, the future would be predictable, and there would be no need for politics. But, it is my conviction that there must be a way to refine this relationship and give more guidance to the private security analyst at work. I consider this issue as being worth of academic reflection.

b. Develop a scale to define words in statistical figures

I believe that the value of a solid analysis is often wasted or tarnished by the use of words such as possible, plausible, or probable. While certain and impossible are quite clear in their meaning, and represent two certitudes on a scale of 0 to 100, the remainder of the scale, from 1 to 99, remains subject to interpretation. In security risk assessment methodologies, a few practitioners have tried to link figures and words (Vellani, 2009). For ease of use, most methodologies use a scale of 1 to 5 and try to give meaning to these figures. The purpose is clear. As Evans aptly remarked: 'As soon as a probability is expressed in numerical terms, it becomes possible to reason about it by employing the formidable tools of mathematics.' (Evans 2012: 127). But what is really the numerical equivalent of words such as possible, plausible, probable? What is the percentage of such a scenario occurring? As Evans rightly says:

> These (scoring) methods fudge matters by using verbal scales, in which risks are characterised as 'low', 'medium' and 'high', instead of asking users to state numerical probabilities. (Evans 2012: 43)

These words are loaded with emotional content that mean different things to different readers. I argue that to reinforce the pertinence of a security report, analysts should commit themselves by providing a statistical equivalent. How would a Reflexive Cultural Realism perspective enhance this research? Would the scale be identical in all cultures? How would the value of an emotional word be culturally decrypted? There is some interesting research to do here that could complement the relevance of the Reflexive Cultural Realism theory.

c. Develop the issue of risk intelligence

The final recommendation for further research is to explore the concept of risk intelligence developed by Evans and defined as 'the ability to estimate probability

accurately' (2012: 23). In his seminal book *Risk Intelligence*, Evans develop a concept that seems to be of the utmost relevance, that of the confidence of the analyst in the validity of their analysis. This avenue for research is not directly linked to the Reflexive Cultural Realism as a theory but rather to the 7-step methodology that I proposed in chapter 6 of this study. The fifth stage of the RCR method, titled *Evaluate the chances of such scenarios occurring*, is devoted to the estimate of the level of probability of such occurrence. In the study, it is briefly mentioned. Yet, I believe that the commitment and the confidence of the analyst to their work, expressed numerically, should become the norm, not only in the private but also the public sector. Evans suggests that, to evaluate the performance of the analysts:

> Intelligence agencies could require analysts to provide numerical probability estimates when forecasting world events and predicting emerging security threats. Over a predefined timeframe, information could be collected about whether or not these events came to pass. Finally, Risk Quotient (Risk intelligence) scores could be calculated and the performance of analysts evaluated. (Evans 2012:41)

This issue deserves to be suitably developed for the private sector as well and I would like to explore such issue at a later stage. Yet, if the link between the theory and risk intelligence seems tenuous, it still exists. Risk intelligence, by working to the development of the analyst's ability to estimate probabilities, is linked to the theoretical part of the RCR. For example, the reflection about the relative ratio of power and culture in the theory, if it produces tangible results, will have a significant impact on the application of risk intelligence to the security equation. As such, it is a research avenue about the improvement of the analyst assertiveness, as well as the development of a crucial skill.

This last recommendation would bring about a revolution in the attitude of analysts comfortably installed in an academic attitude and often too distant from reality. It would help the merging of the job of security analyst and that of security consultant, where field experience and academic knowledge would blend into a pragmatic approach to security. The Reflexive Cultural Realism approach, combining theory and practice would make private security analysts more effective in their tasks. If Bryant is to be believed:

> Because education and the social sciences often have a direct relationship to professional practice, it is quite common for dissertation researchers to also connect their finding to ways to improve practice. (Bryant 2004: 131)

This is the core of this study and I expect this research will contribute positively to this objective, by bringing theory into the security equation, by reflecting on academic ways to make private security analysts more effective, and by providing theoretically informed analyses to the corporate decision maker. I also trust that I have contributed to the improvement of the skills of security practitioners whose area of expertise is not security analysis but who may, as part of their brief, be expected to deliver relevant reports about their immediate security environment. They were the audience I had in mind when I began this research and I believe that the tenets of the Reflexive Cultural Realist theory coupled with a simple but effective application method will make them more confident security practitioners and provide the security analysts in their consultancy with structured and valuable security information.

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Appendix 1

List of interviewees and positions they occupied at the time of the interview:

Name	Company	Function	Date of the interview	Location of the interview
David HARTWELL	IHS Jane's Publications	Editor of Jane's Islamic Affairs	19th May 2011	IHS Jane's Offices in London
Marie BOS	Control Risks Group	Analyst for Middle-East and North Africa	1st June 2011	CRG Offices in Dubai (UAE)
Georgiy VOLOSHIN	Risk&Co	Analyst for Russian Federation and satellites	24 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Yves TROTIGNON	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Terrorism/counter-terrorism	24 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Anneliese CORLOBE	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Asia	24 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Priscilla SADATCHY	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Africa	24 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Paul CHAIGNON	Risk& Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Africa	24 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Pauline BLIT	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Asia	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Marc BRULPORT	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Russia and Russian Federation	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Marion TROVO-HARLAY	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Latin America	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Meryem BOUKARAI	Risk&Co	Analyst-Consultant Country Risk for Middle East & North Africa	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Jean-Marc BALENCIE	Risk& Co	Head of the department – Analyst for Africa	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine
Franck-Emmanuel CAILLAUD	Risk& Co	General Director Strategic Analyses	25 June 2013	Risk&Co offices in Neuilly-sur-seine

Table 2: List of participants to semi-structured interviews

Appendix 2

Ethics documents (1)

Participation Information Form

Study title

'What realism for which future: a search for a realist international security-forecasting model'

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

My name is Jean Perois and I am a security practitioner living and working in the Middle East. I became interested in security forecasting a few years ago while working as a security analyst in Jeddah (KSA). After a Master's Degree in International Policy and Diplomacy, I decided to dedicate my PhD topic to the search for a specific international security-forecasting model that could be used as a guideline by security analysts involved in international affairs analyses and forecasting.

The purpose of this study was, originally, to search for a security-forecasting model that would be expressed in the framework of the Realist school of thought. Today, it has evolved tremendously, and the initial paradigm has been opened to other areas of social and political sciences, such as constructivism, foreign policy analysis and reflexive realism.
This study will comprise, among others, research of the existing literature, interviews of security analysts, and surveys about forecasting techniques.
I have so far completed a zero draft of the thesis and I am now focusing on the interviews with professional analysts.

Why have you been invited to participate?

I had planned on having a security survey whose results would prove sufficient to illustrate or contradict my assumptions, but the response rate proved far too disappointing to provide any significant answer to the questions asked.
Yet, I have previously interviewed two analysts in 2011, one in Dubai, the other one in London, both working for reputable companies, and these interviews yielded interesting results. These interviews, though, were performed at the beginning of the study, and my research has evolved so much that new questions need to be asked, and answers found.

I would like to use these semi-structured group interviews to fine-tune my assumptions, broaden my findings, and get a feeling of how Risk&Co analysts:

- Perceive their work and assess its limits,
- Weigh the relative power of structure versus agency,
- Create their analyses using what variables,
- Assess the value of their analyses internally and what they think about the practicality of forecasting international affairs.

Your name was advanced by Franck-Emmanuel Caillaud.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Please note that even If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without justification.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Our meetings are planned on 24th and 25th June 2013 in Risk&Co Offices in Neuilly (France).
I envision an interview of about one hour per group. Questions will be sent to you in advance in order to save time and allow you time to better understand the topic. I would like to conduct the interview in a semi-structured interview type. This means that some questions have already been selected. These questions are important to my research and they form the backbone of our interview.
I plan to spend 7/8 minutes to answer each of these questions and then carry on in an informal manner according to the common interest developed during the interview.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The purpose of this study is to look for an acceptably simple model able to help anticipate or forecast international security trends in the medium term. There is no guarantee of success but the study intends at least to be a reflection on whether such a model is possible in the given context, and, in the affirmative, what will be its limits. This should be of interest to you, as a security analyst, and to Risk&Co as well. A copy of the findings will be delivered to you personally (at your request only) and to your company's management.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, everything mentioned during the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. The data generated in the course of this interview shall be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project (University of Leicester regulation).

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The data collected during the interview will then be used in my PhD dissertation. Once the dissertation is published, a copy of the dissertation will be sent to Risk&Co where you will be welcome to consult it. In case this dissertation evolves in a published book, I will require again your authorisation to use part of the interview, and you will be fully entitled to reject my demand.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting this research in my personal capacity and as a student at the University of Leicester, department of Politics
There is no external funding of the research.

Contact for Further Information

For further information you can contact me:
- Jean Perois; jmp51@leicester.ac.uk or jperois@riskeco.com ; Tel +973 36115772

Or my supervisors at the University of Leicester:

- Professor Mark Phythian; mp249@leicester.ac.uk ; Tel +44 116 252 2704
- Doctor Kelly Staples; kls25@leicester.ac.uk ; Tel: +44 116 252 3003
-

Feel free to contact my supervisors should you have any concerns regarding this interview, at any stage.

I thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Bahrain, 16th June 2013

Appendix 3

Ethics documents (2)

Informed Consent Form

Full title of project: *What Realism for which future? A search for a realist international security forecasting model*

Name, position and contact address of researcher:
Jean Perois
Citadel Compound 2, Bldg 677, Apt 21
Road 7912 Block 579
Janabiya
Kingdom of Bahrain
Tel: +973 3611 57 72
Email: jperois@riskeco.com; jmp51@le.ac.uk

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

Include the following statements, if appropriate:
☐ I agree to the interview being audio recorded
☐ I agree to the interview being video recorded
☐ I agree to the use of anonymised quotations in publications

Signed and dated by participant and researcher

Name of the participant: Jean Perois, researcher
Date: Date:
Signature: Signature: