

Michael Klare's Contribution to World Security Studies and Key Strategic Issues

Alex Burns (alex@disinfo.com), June 2006

Abstract

This essay undertakes a critical analysis of Hampshire College professor Michael Klare's contribution to Strategic and Security Studies. It draws on Klare's popular writings, policy analysis and scholarship from the Vietnam Syndrome to the contemporary debate on energy policy and oil geopolitics. Klare's critical worldview integrates perspectives from constructivist international relations, global security and peace studies to interrogate the Revolution in Military Affairs, environmental security and the collective dimension of non-proliferation initiatives. Klare's initiatives include discourse development of World Security Studies, curricula guides for arms control and peace studies, and issues guides. Key issues explored include arms control, oil geopolitics, non-proliferation, rogue states and conflict planning.

Key Research Questions

- How has Michael Klare's career as a public intellectual reflected paradigmatic and thematic changes in Security Studies discourse?
- What contributions has Klare made to understanding the policymaking 'wicked problems' of environmental security, humanitarian intervention, arms flows and nuclear proliferation?
- Why has Klare critiqued the Bush Administration's geopolitical stance on the Global War on Terror and oil geopolitics? How does his analysis differ from Peak Oil theorists?

Introduction

For the past 30 years Michael Klare has been at the forefront of Critical and World Security Studies discourse. From critical evaluation of the Pentagon's counterinsurgency doctrines and post-war planning to contemporary concerns about oil geopolitics and resource wars, Klare's research serves as a barometer of the discourse shifts in strategic scholarship. In the post-September 11 environment he has emerged as a major public intellectual in New Left circles about security issues.

This essay provides an overview of Klare's career, discourse development and pedagogical approaches. It articulates four distinct analytical levels in Klare's work: major disruptions, world systems, doctrinal history and institutional dynamics (also detailed in mind-map and emerging issues form as two appendices). These analytical levels are then applied to major themes in Klare's writings, from war-planning and the 'rogue states' doctrine to the arms trade and the 'peak oil' debate. Finally, Klare's recent contributions and relationship to other strategic thinkers are detailed. As a body of work, Klare's research offers an opening for Security Studies students to engage with contemporary and emerging issues of significance, and a model for new scholars to engage with the general public.

Klare's Career and Discourse Contributions

Klare's career has evolved through several distinct phases.¹ His first book *War Without End: American Planning for the Next Vietnams* (1972), hereafter *WWE*, reflects the tumultuous climate of the early 1970s, from campus underground sit-ins to the Pentagon Papers leak. Klare's early work synergised the oppositional politics of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) with neo-Marxist institutional analysis.² Klare adopted NACLA's critical stance in *WWE* to highlight the interrelationship between Southeast Asia's socioeconomic problems, Pentagon planners, and United States research think-tanks. *WWE*'s critique revealed how activist and progressive protest movements had created a counter-narrative to planners and think-tanks about Vietnam War strategic thinking. This figurative period also reflected a romanticised view: Klare described the Vietnam conflict as a 'People's War' and wrote favourably of guerrilla Ernesto 'Che' Guevara.³

The second phase of Klare's career encompassed his doctoral studies and a research fellowship at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). Klare's dissertation at Union College examined how the Nixon Doctrine created the strategic pretext for US military intervention in the Persian Gulf to prevent exogenous oil shocks.⁴ Klare then spent a year with Princeton University's Richard Falk.⁵ Although the impact of this period is unclear, Klare's subsequent writings articulate similar concerns to Falk about humanitarian justice, normative values and world systems.⁶ At IPS Klare was the Director of the Program on Militarism and Disarmament from 1977 to 1985. Although this essay does not cover them, Klare wrote several monographs on the security dimension of Middle East oil policy and arms control that were explored in

later articles and books. Klare mapped out the doctrinal evolution from the Eisenhower to the Reagan Administrations, and his institutional analysis shifted to key strategic actors and interdependencies in the world system.

From 1985 to the present Klare has been the Director of the Program in Peace and World Security Studies at Amherst's Hampshire College. He spent the late 1980s collaborating with colleagues on curricula resources for arms control, nuclear disarmament and peace studies.⁷ During this period, Klare also elaborated on World Security Studies (WSS) as an interdisciplinary subfield of Strategic Studies that was relevant for the post-Cold War environment and security threats. WSS is discussed in greater detail below. Since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Klare has become a public intellectual who discusses collective security, emerging strategic issues and oil geopolitics. These dimensions are explored in further detail below.

Klare's Pedagogy for Strategic Studies

Michael Klare's career provides an exemplar case of the academic contribution to Strategic Studies. His published writings reflect the evolution of Strategic Studies discourse, as Klare's analysis mode changed from neo-Marxist in phase one, to institutional actor in phase two, and to WSS multidimensional views in phase three.

Klare's body of work conveys an in-depth knowledge of discourse analysis. The sections on US doctrinal history, the cross-comparison of force make-up and power projection between the US and other nation-states, and post-mortems on major

conflicts provide diverse case studies. His understanding of institutional dynamics is more fair-minded and less ad hominem than other New Left critics. His sources range from US Government agencies to the Congressional Research Service and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.⁸

In his later books Klare separates his policymaking prescriptions from his institutional analysis and critique. Drawing on an 'alternative analysis' framework Klare advocates international collaboration and institutional reforms which reflect a cooperative security stance. This distinction clarifies the basis of Klare's theory construction and enables other strategic analysts to evaluate their applicability and parsimony.

The curricula guides highlight Klare's application of this distinction to discourse development. His critical bibliographies and notes on key texts provide course models on key security issues that are situated within the Critical Security Studies tradition. Consequently, Klare's reading selection is informed by post-colonial and post-structuralist scholarship. The guides suggest that Klare favours an exploratory and non-doctrinaire approach to teaching Strategic Studies that conscientises the student to current problems in the global order.⁹ Finally, they illustrate how Klare interacts with other strategic thinkers in an interdisciplinary fashion.

Klare's career arc and pedagogy suggests a Gramscian struggle for influence against the more hegemonic neo-realist canon in the United States. This struggle begins from the outside in NACLA's independent forums and culminates in Klare's status as an influential public intellectual within a legitimated institutional setting. Building a

long-term social policy network remains vital to achieving this shift. It underpins Klare's involvement with New Left and progressive media since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, and his crucial role in developing WSS as a Strategic Studies subfield.

Klare's analysis of the mid-1990s debate in *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws* (1995), hereafter *Rogue States*, exemplifies his case study approach. In a collection of security mini-briefs, he considers each country's history; its key security dilemmas; regional risks; its past involvement in conflicts; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear programs, and the psychological profile of the country's leadership.

Klare's pedagogy also reflects his awareness of civil society actors to shape perceptions about emerging security threats. Environmental security and the arms trade in particular have a strong emotive force to mobilise these actors. In *Beyond The "Vietnam Syndrome"* (1981), hereafter *BTVS*, and *American Arms Supermarkets* (1984), hereafter *AAS*, he notes the Roman Catholic Church and human rights activist opposed US intervention in El Salvador. In several books and monographs Klare and his colleagues objected to the US Army-funded School of the Americas, subsequently renamed as the Western Hemisphere for Security Cooperation,¹⁰ alleging that many of its alumnus used their counterinsurgency skills to torture Marxist, Communist and leftist activists under Operation Condor.¹¹ In *Rogue States* he warned that the Pentagon's post-Cold War search for new enemies had set it on a "collision course" with these movements, who were angered by the first Bush and Clinton Administrations' rejection of the "peace dividend".¹²

Klare's curricula also parallels the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), which has developed experiential scenarios and simulations based on real-world conflict situations. USIP's curricula design is oriented toward security flashpoints and hotspots that may generate new conflicts.¹³ The cross-comparison of USIP and Klare's work could be used to create more robust curricula. Klare has also acknowledged the IPS and the Federation of American Scientists in developing a policy and research network with a Critical Security Studies orientation.

World Security Studies

As Klare envisions it, World Security Studies (WSS) encompasses a syncretic approach to the multi-dimensional risks, problems and threats of the post-Cold War era. Its scope includes but is not limited to arms control and non-proliferation, conflict and war causation, global order and international peacemaking. WSS is informed by the normative values of peace studies and critical theory to generate alternative policy frameworks. It implicitly acknowledges the English School's view on international institutions to resolve anarchy, and the Constructivist view that new strategic actors could change or influence social norms at the international level.

WSS emphasises the collective, common and human-oriented definitions of security. For example, in Klare's alternative analyses in *Resource Wars* (2001) and *Blood & Oil* (2004), hereafter *RW* and *B&O*, he calls for new international institutions to manage the global resource commons.¹⁴ Although Klare acknowledges bureaucratic and institutional factors, his alternative analyses are weakened by not dealing enough with these diffusion and power issues.

For Klare, a central element of WSS is its holistic map of dynamical changes and “global tectonics” in the world system. In his reflections on pedagogy, Klare emphasised four key “global tectonics: “global economic pressures . . . political trends . . . sociocultural trends . . . [and] environmental and population pressures.”¹⁵ By the early 1990s Klare had refined the list further to include various types of ethnic and nationalist conflicts that had re-emerged as major security problems.¹⁶ This transition also reflected Klare’s greater emphasis on transborder conflicts.

Hubert Sauper’s documentary *Darwin’s Nightmare* (2004) highlights the interdependencies of Klare’s ‘tectonic forces’. Whilst investigating a fish problem in Africa’s Lake Victoria, Sauper uncovers a litany of problems: political corruption, poverty, religious fundamentalism and resources scarcity. The documentary’s key revelation occurs when a Russian pilot admits to Sauper on-camera that the same planes that fly the fish to European markets return with small arms for the Congo conflict.¹⁷ *Darwin’s Nightmare* exemplifies the progressive political dimension of World Security Studies in showing its audience the hidden links between mundane life and conflict triggers.

WSS consequently has close links or parallels with several schools of International Relations theory and Strategic Studies. These include New War theorists such as Mary Kaldor (who was in the European arm of IPS during Klare’s stint) and Herried Munckler; anthropologists like Carolyn Nordstrom whose has revealed the pivotal role of private military/security companies in perpetuating conflicts; and the emerging subfield of shadow globalisation work on small arms flows, the black market trade in

weapons of mass destruction, and people smuggling.¹⁸ Collectively these schools promise to revitalise Strategic Studies in the 21st century.

Analysis Factors

Klare's work features several analysis levels to explore the emerging issues of strategic significance. He considers a range of factors in his analysis, which distinguishes holistically between the world system, subsystems, strategic actors and cause—effect relationships. The underlying continuities in arms trade, planning and power projection to anticipate 'over the horizon' threats are noted. This section summarises the different levels and their role in Klare's publications.

Analysis Level 1 encompasses *Major Disruptions* and exogenous shocks that influence the strategic environment. These include the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Country's (OPEC) oil embargo (1974), Paul Volcker's credit freeze (1981) and the first Gulf War (1991). Klare notes that Harold Brown, then the US Secretary of Defence, viewed "international turbulence" as an "autonomous threat" that would shape the US security outlook.¹⁹ This period also coincided with broader debate on the structural dimensions of North-South geoeconomic relations.²⁰ The Cold War's end in 1990 disrupted the "mental maps" that US strategists had used, and challenged their assumptions of a "symbiotic relationship with the Soviet military."²¹

Analysis Level 2 scopes the *World System* and its structural effects on global order and violence. In *WWE* he proposed that the developing Third World was structurally coupled to the First World via the Washington Consensus and its Structural Adjustment Programs.²² This created a security dilemma for US business elites that needed the Third World for low-cost manufacturing and as an export market for excess production. Klare concluded that the US developed geostrategic buffers and power projection capabilities to stabilise the world system. However the interdependencies of energy demand and resources scarcity leads to cyclical instabilities.²³ It also creates a new battle for geostrategic primacy between the US, Russia and China over the Caspian Sea basin's energy and oil supplies.²⁴

Another instability source is ethno-political conflicts against corrupt regimes and authoritarian governments that are supported by US interests. In *B&O* Klare observes that petroleum states such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are security bottlenecks in the Middle East at risk of internal destabilisation.²⁵ The Caspian Sea basin is also prey to ethno-political instabilities and guerrilla attacks on supply pipelines.²⁶

Analysis Level 3 considers the *Doctrinal History* that has shaped US strategic discourse. *WWE* detailed how the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations prompted research into 'agile' counterinsurgency solutions in the Vietnam War.²⁷ Several of Klare's books and monographs in the early 1980s reassessed the Carter Administration's problematic attempts to bring humanitarian concerns to international politics, via an "arms restraint" policy.²⁸ **Appendix 2** summarises how geostrategic problems and Administration doctrinal choices can shape the force calculus in US power projection.

Each Administration has used crisis language and metaphors to validate its Grand Strategy worldview and to garner public support for its policies. Echoing feminist critics, Klare notes the frequent use of psycho-sexual language in descriptions of US non-intervention.²⁹ Another problem is how US Doctrines shape how strategic analysts perceive their enemies. In *BTVS* Klare critiques how Reagan Administration officials perceived Soviet intervention in the Angola and Ethiopia/Eritrea proxy wars.³⁰ Recent disclosures from the Mitrokhin Archive suggest that KGB strategists were susceptible to mirror-imaging about their geostrategic interventions and sponsored insurgencies.³¹

Analysis Level 4 deals with *Institutional Dynamics* such as bureaucratic decision-making processes and issue-attention cycles that shape near-term tactical responses to *Major Disruptions* and *World Systems* problems. As detailed below, the Pentagon used the first Gulf War to regain influence over US military budgets.³²

In *BTVS* Klare develops an elite model as an analytic tool to discuss the shifting debate between US geostrategic planners. He distinguishes between “Traders” who are pursuing a Trilateralist-style global economic order that reflects US interests; and “Prussians” who demand an interventionist foreign policy, and military power projection against Soviet forces and Third World small wars.³³ This model may reflect Fletcher Prouty’s belief that a ‘secret team’ helped to shape Eisenhower and Kenny Administration counterinsurgency policies.³⁴

Institutional dynamics are also central to the bureaucratic imperatives of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) in the arms trade. Despite a contestation process, Klare notes “that each agency tends to advance the position most consistent with its functional identity within the bureaucratic structure.”³⁵ Consequently, this creates a situation where “the same government agencies often serve both as arms suppliers and as arms regulators”: an institutional conflict of interest that Jane Jacobs’ “guardianship” and “commercial” systems and that may lead to organisational hypocrisy.³⁶

Key Issues on Security and Strategy

This section summarises Klare’s contributions and insights regarding key issues on doctrinal evolution, security issues and strategic thinking.

Planning, Crisis Narratives and Preemption

Klare’s initial work focused on Vietnam War planners. In *WWE* he conducted an in-depth institutional analysis of the Counterinsurgency Research Network, Klare’s label for the research institutes and think-tanks involved in tactical innovations.³⁷ The Kennedy Administration’s counterinsurgency doctrines created the US Army Green Berets, Navy Seals and Air Force’s Special Operations Force, who bridged military and politico-economic modes of intervention.³⁸

The ‘Vietnams of the Future’ in *WWE* were later replaced by the ‘Iraqs of the Future’ in *Rogue States*, which highlighted the continuity between conflicts and post-mortems by strategists.³⁹ This combination of counterinsurgency research and likely conflicts

meant that the lessons learnt could be applied to US planning in the Gulf War.⁴⁰ However, it also meant that perceptions about critical uncertainties and threats were often intertwined with US power projections. This is evident in the post-Vietnam threat scenarios that shaped counterinsurgency tactics in the Carter and Reagan Administrations;⁴¹ the forecasting of future conflicts from current hotspots;⁴² and the institutionalisation of military force reviews and scenarios in the early Clinton Administration for non-proliferation initiatives.⁴³

‘Agile’ and Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) models were conceived in the Kennedy and Reagan Administrations to deal with Viet Cong insurgents and ‘police actions’ in Laos and Thailand. Reagan elevated RDF to become the Central Command (Centcom) and have priority over the Persian Gulf region, notably to secure US access to energy and oil supplies.

Consequently, Centcom’s power projection capabilities have been described via a preemption calculus.⁴⁴ This calculus was conceived to resolve the ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ (the Nixon Doctrine’s rejection by the American public for foreign incursions) through information warfare, media management and the ‘will to victory’ to overpower the enemy psyche.⁴⁵ Preemption received limited support when the Clinton Administration shaped its security Grand Strategy around the risk of rogue states who acquired chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapon capabilities.⁴⁶ The Bush Administration’s adoption of preemption in its first National Security Statement (2002) reflects the neoconservative unipolar agenda and democratisation ideals.⁴⁷

The interaction of Doctrinal History and Institutional Dynamics has led to mission and scope creep. The US demand to fight 1.5 wars escalated in the post-Cold War era to 2 simultaneous conflicts in Europe against the Warsaw Pact and a counterinsurgency, and then to include the Persian Gulf.⁴⁸ In *RW* Klare observes the US demand is now for 3 wars primarily in the Middle East and the Caspian Sea basin.⁴⁹

Non-proliferation and Rogue States

For the Clinton and early second Bush Administration, the spectre of rogue states provided justification for the Pentagon to retain power projection capabilities in the post-Cold War period. The Rogue Doctrine emerged from Reagan Administration depictions of international terrorism as Soviet-sponsored and initiated by Third World proxy states.⁵⁰ The Rogue Doctrine also reflected an emerging consensus between right-wing think-tanks and the arms control community. Both groups feared that regional or unaligned Third World powers would gain access to technology that would alter the military balance of power and challenge America's superpower status.⁵¹ The 1992 "Defense Planning Guidance Scenario Set" identified a range of conflicts from low-intensity to a new Cold War, although the scenarios were publicly attacked when leaked to the US media.⁵²

In *Rogue States* Klare develops a proliferation hierarchy of nation-states that were viewed as potential security threats.⁵³ Clinton Administration strategists identified the core group of rogue states—Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria—in the mid-

1990s, well before David Frum coined the term 'axis of evil' for the second Bush Administration.⁵⁴ The Clinton Administration's provisional list also included a range of geostrategic challengers (China and India) and allies with specific security disputes (Egypt, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey).⁵⁵

Klare concludes in his survey of non-proliferation strategies that the Rogue States doctrine has enabled the Pentagon's bureaucracy to maintain its resources at higher levels than a peacetime reduction would have allowed for.⁵⁶ Non-proliferation policies have reflected earlier policies on technology transfer in the arms trade, and their application has been inconsistent.⁵⁷

The Arms Trade and Technology Transfer

In the 1970s US strategists used the arms trade to enhance US economic security and enable client states to quell domestic insurgencies. On 19 May 1977 the Carter Administration announced a new arms trade policy, based on restraint and restrictions of transfers to authoritarian regimes.⁵⁸ Carter's decision reflected concerns that sales to US allies had shifted from internal security against insurgencies to regional arms races and potential conflicts between nation-states.⁵⁹

The fate of Iran's Pahlavi regime illustrates how the arms trade was intertwined with other security issues.⁶⁰ The Nixon Administration engaged in arms sales to Iran's Pahlavi regime, in a bid to establish a Middle East proxy state. The Carter Administration also sought to gain leverage with Iran to prevent the recurrence of the 1973 oil crisis sparked by OPEC.⁶¹ Iran spent 25% of public funds on US arms in the

mid 1970s and the number of US advisers rose 215% from 1975 to 1978.⁶² This trend helped to destabilise Iran's economy, fed anti-American sentiments, and highlights the linkages between exogenous shocks, arms sales and petroleum dollars.

Klare distinguishes between Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Commercial Sales (CS) in the arms trade community.⁶³ He raises public awareness of the key FMS institutions in the Pentagon and the US State Department that oversee arms transfers.⁶⁴ Klare's studies in *Supplying Repression* and *American Arms Sales* note the key roles of major firms such as General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and Raytheon in providing CS arms sales to foreign countries.⁶⁵

Diplomacy and activism have targeted the major European suppliers—Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom—and the former Soviet Union.⁶⁶ Arms purchasers have a range of motivations, from internal security and regional power projection to the influence of military strategists on policy decision-making.⁶⁷

Klare's analysis of US arms sales to Third World countries reflects a neo-Imperialist view that FMS and private military/security companies become intertwined with the conflict.⁶⁸ Recent research by Deborah Avant echoes Klare's long-held belief that private military/security companies and contractors are playing a dangerous role in new conflicts.⁶⁹ Loopholes in the arms trade system include "third-country transfers" between the United States and friendly nations under the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the provision of small arms to authoritarian regimes with poor records on human rights.⁷⁰ Argentina's 'Dirty War' and state-sponsored terrorism in El Salvador and Guatemala exemplify how small arms can be more deadly than 'weapons of mass

destruction' for internal security.⁷¹ Small arms flows can lead to the escalation of violence elsewhere.⁷²

The technological dimension of arms sales underpinned the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) promoted by Donald Rumsfeld and others. RMA theorists contended that a 'post-industrial battlefield' would occur in the post-Cold War world.⁷³ The first Gulf War provided an RMA test case where many of its key themes were proven: air force power made Coalition forces almost invincible; the US developed a balanced force structure; and the Gulf War's outcome elevated mobilisation flexibility as an RMA requirement.

However, Klare reached different conclusions about the first Gulf War and RMA's doctrinal applicability. Rather than the 'post-industrial battlefield' that RMA prophesied, Klare counters that US forces were equipped with the latest technological advances against weakened Iraqi forces who were soon overpowered.⁷⁴ RMA also minimises several lessons from the first Gulf War that may have prevented the 2003 Iraq War from becoming a 'quagmire' for US forces. These lessons included that in order to build effective coalitions the US needed to adopt a collective security stance than its unipolar policies, and that Desert Storm circumstances and US-Iraq force differences would not necessarily translate to other conflicts.⁷⁵

Klare believes that the key lesson not learnt by Pentagon planners in the first Gulf War was that ethical and humanitarian dimensions become secondary to technomilitary force in conflicts.⁷⁶ He cites incidents such as Baghdad's Highway of Death to illustrate how the first Gulf War had dubious moral dimensions, and why Just War

ethics are ignored in high-velocity situations.⁷⁷ Klare's emphasis on consequentialist ethics signifies why he believes RMA is an over-hyped doctrine. His awareness of second- and third-order effects provides another reason why Klare rejects the current arms trade as unsustainable for US long-term security, and urges for it to be curbed.⁷⁸

Resource Wars, Oil Geopolitics and the 'Peak Oil' Debate

Klare introduced 'resource wars' as a theme in *BTVS* during an examination of how the Carter and Haig Doctrines each targeted oil and minerals as critical resources.⁷⁹ Resource wars were originally conceived via the lens of Soviet bases and proxy states in Angola and Ethiopia, or an Afghanistan-style conflict in Southern Africa.⁸⁰ In *RW* Klare posits that resources will be the defining feature of future conflicts, rather than competing explanations offered by Samuel P. Huntington, Thomas Friedman and Robert Kaplan.⁸¹ Resource wars range from conflicts based on oil and water shortages, to the role of 'conflict diamonds' and timber in ethno-political conflicts.⁸² Resources also provide a different lens on past conflicts, such as the strategic role of water supplies in the 1967 Six-Day War.⁸³ In 2005 the Worldwatch Institute validated Klare's theses when it made energy security issues the theme of its annual review, a move that legitimated how these issues are at the nexus of contemporary security problems.⁸⁴

Oil geopolitics is a major theme that runs through Klare's professional work. In his 1976 doctoral dissertation Klare explored how the Nixon Doctrine gave US energy conglomerates the strategic pretext to intervene in the Persian Gulf.⁸⁵ Consequently, Klare provides a more critical view of oil geopolitics than neo-realist analysts who are more concerned with the links between energy security and international commodity markets. China and India's emergence as proto-superpowers with population growth will spur hypercompetition for scarce energy resources. Neo-realist analysts fear that China is going through an imperialist phase of expansion and growth.

New geostrategic chokepoints for US dependency on oil include Venezuela; the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; and the Caspian Sea basin. Klare notes that alternative oil sources for the US encompass unstable "global tectonics" and security threats: Africa (resource wars), South America (nationalist conflicts), and the Caspian Sea basin (ethnic tensions, nationalist conflicts).⁸⁶ Although the Bush Administration has promised diversification in energy and oil sources, Klare contends that this rhetoric is unrealistic given the chokepoints and instabilities of these alternative sources.⁸⁷

The Middle East remains a vital hotspot for US oil supplies. The Carter Doctrine signalled that the US would defend the Straits of Hormuz, and US President George H. Bush reproclaimed its importance when lobbying for the international coalition to defend Kuwait in the first Gulf War.⁸⁸ For Klare, this creates a lock-in situation for the US in the Persian Gulf region: it elevates the role of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran and the United Arab Emirates as the five primary producers of US oil supplies.⁸⁹

Apart from the Carter Doctrine, this lock-in is clear in the US-led regime change in Iraq and the neoconservative bid to restrict Iran's regional influence.⁹⁰

Klare believes that its reliance on oil implicated the US in Saudi Arabian corruption and human rights abuses. House of Saud royalty face a legitimization crisis that fuels the fear of politically motivated dissidents and internal destabilisation. Klare's emphasis was on the security dilemma this 'wicked problem' creates, rather than the political fallout between the Bush Administration and the House of Saud after September 11.⁹¹ The Carter Doctrine may potentially lead to a Vietnam-style escalation scenario where US counterinsurgency advisers are the precursors to greater conflict with political dissidents and terrorist cadres. These complexities mean that Saudi Arabia will probably continue to be a volatile 'wild card' for decades.

In *RW* and *B&O* Klare acknowledges the recent debate about 'peak oil'. Geological engineer M. King Hubbert warned in the mid-1950s that global oil production output would peak, before geological and technological constraints would lead to limited reserves and, finally irreversible decline. This 'overshoot and collapse' scenario has grave implications for energy security if the US Department of Energy's future projections for oil demand become true.⁹² Although Hubbert's thesis was dismissed by industry analysts, it has been favourably re-evaluated by Paul Roberts, Matthew Simmons and others.⁹³ An apocalyptic sub-current runs through the 'peak oil' debate due to the influence of deep ecologists on some aspects of biosphere-oriented geostrategy.⁹⁴

For Klare, ‘peak oil’ is an emerging security threat that strategic analysts must consider. Simmons’ analysis of industry statistics and trends reveals the danger of US dependency on oil, which will continue despite the Bush Administration’s plans to exploit Alaskan reserves and develop hydrogen alternatives. Klare agrees with Simmons that Saudi Arabian oil industry sources cannot be trusted at face value, and that the Bush Administration’s policies reflect the “business as usual” status quo.⁹⁵ After showing how the Department of Energy often relies on Saudi Arabian figures for its energy forecasts, Klare contrasts its Petroleum Age scenario with Simmons’ ‘peak oil’ scenario, and warns of dependency problems.⁹⁶ Klare’s emphasis on the security dimensions also means that he does not have the conspiratorial worldview of 9/11 Truth Movement advocates such as Michael C. Ruppert.⁹⁷

Comparisons With Other Security and Strategy Analysts

This section compares Klare’s work briefly with other security and strategic analysts, including Chalmers Johnson, Robert Kaplan, and Thomas P.M. Barnett. Further comparisons have been noted elsewhere in this essay in the appropriate sections.

Chalmers Johnson: Klare’s early work emphasised US geostrategic ambitions through the spread of counter-insurgency techniques, small arms flows and regional military bases. Klare located this in a neo-Marxist and Imperialist framework designed to impose US hegemony on developing nations. Gradually, geoeconomic influence replaced military power as a persuasion force. Chalmers Johnson revisits this theme in his books *Blowback* (2002) and *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004), and examines their impact on post-September 11 geostrategy.⁹⁸ In *Sorrows*, Johnson

notes the over 725 US military bases which span the globe, a proto-empire that has its roots in Cold War containment policies.⁹⁹ Klare notes these bases have “strategic significance” and were often integrated with arms transfers to the “host country.”¹⁰⁰

Robert Kaplan: Robert Kaplan offers a divergent view to Klare which more reflects ‘tragic realism’. Kaplan’s book *The Coming Anarchy* (1996) echoes Klare’s concerns about environmental catastrophes and failed states, yet does not have the detail on institutions and strategic actors such as arms dealers.¹⁰¹ Kaplan’s recent depiction of US Special Operations forces as the vanguard elite that will anticipate new security threats continues a major theme of Klare’s early work, but with a more optimistic viewpoint on how cultural anthropology can be applied to new conflict zones.¹⁰²

Thomas P.M. Barnett: Barnett’s work in Strategic Studies represents a synthesis of neo-realist and constructivist models of international relations, which appeals to Pentagon planners. Barnett’s model in *The Pentagon’s New Map* (2004) also mirrors Immanuel Wallerstein’s centre-periphery relationship. Although Klare and Barnett acknowledge the world system, they have different models of its dynamical changes. Klare notes that Pentagon planners were searching for “a large systemwide threat to global stability” which Barnett feels Al Qaeda fulfilled on 11 September 2001.¹⁰³ Barnett’s model differentiates between a Core group of democratic nation-states, and a Gap of weak and failed nation-states with resource wars and ethno-nationalist conflicts. Barnett also proposes a liberal internationalist-style global force for conflict prevention, whilst cautioning for the US to return to a small war focus.¹⁰⁴ This view means that unlike Klare, Barnett calls for the increased export of counterinsurgency and small arms equipment to Allies who can help transform the Gap. The

neoconservative strategist Max Boot provides a counterpoint to both Barnett and Klare, arguing that the United States has expanded its geostrategic footprint via small wars.¹⁰⁵

Some of Klare's insights on the key security and strategic issues cited above have been validated by other authors. Amy Chua has noted that the US drive for democratisation and proxy states can lead to ethno-political instabilities, which Klare warned of in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with foreign workers.¹⁰⁶ Exclusive Economic Zones in the South China Sea could also be a near-term flashpoint.¹⁰⁷ Stephen G. Brooks provides new research on how trans-national corporations influence global arms trade flows, technology transfer and regional security.¹⁰⁸ Anthony J. Hall, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have expanded the People's War sections of *WWE* into a vast historical tapestry of indigenous resistance to the US security apparatus.¹⁰⁹ These scholars promise to expand the breadth and depth of Klare's topics.

Post-September 11 Role as a Public Intellectual

Klare's stature as a public intellectual has grown since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. This stature reflects Klare's more nuanced analysis of security policy than other partisan commentators. Klare has written extensively for New Left and progressive magazines and sites, primarily *MotherJones*, *The Nation* and *TomsDispatch.com*. This essay notes several key pieces, as Klare's entire public advocacy is beyond its scope.

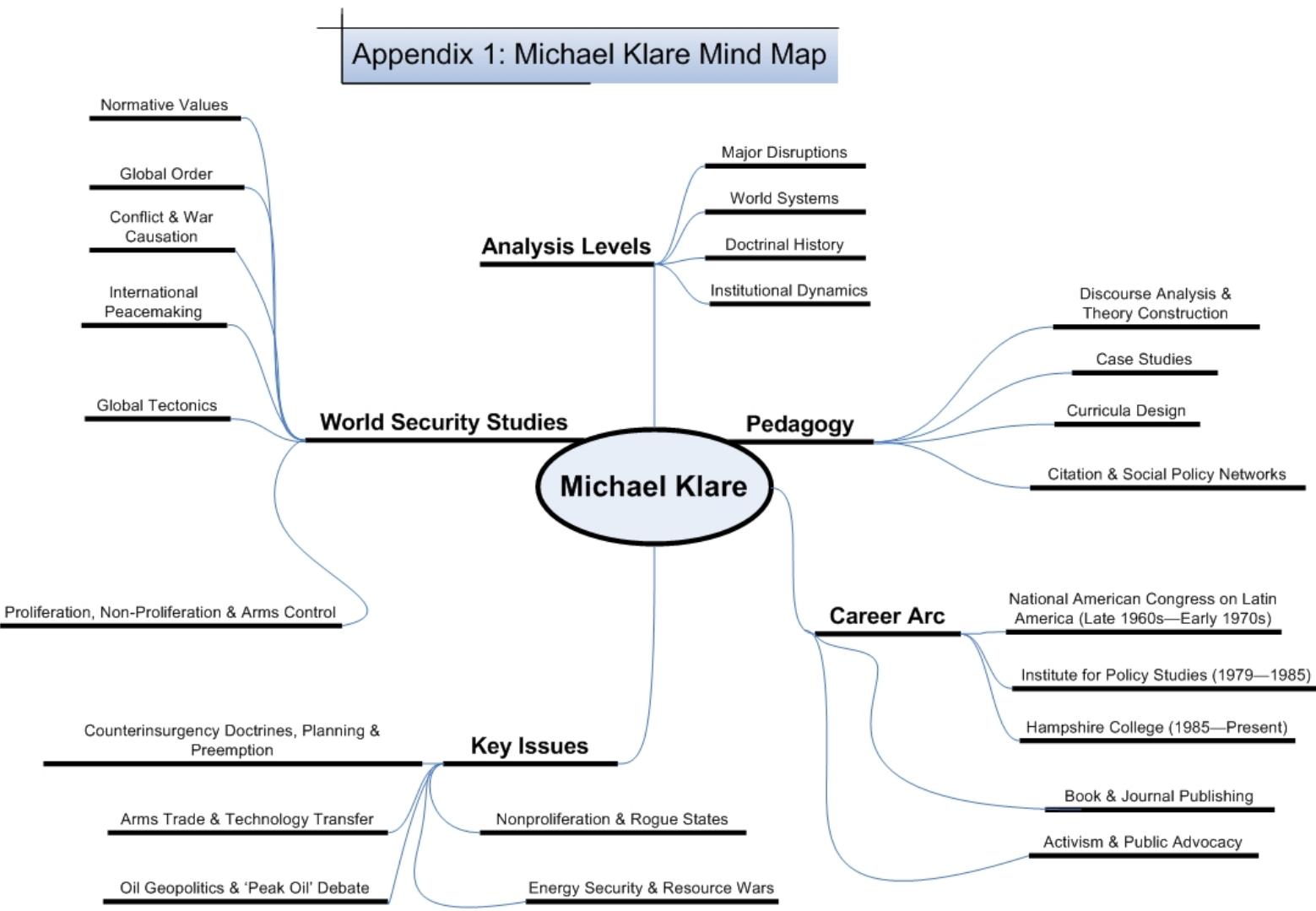
Klare's major contributions were to evaluate the Bush Administration's Grand Strategy vision, the impact of WSS global tectonics, and the pivotal role of oil geopolitics. In his essay 'The New Geopolitics' Klare situates the Bush Administration's neoconservatives within a neo-Marxist history of Great Power imperialist politics. He warns that the neoconservative unipolar vision has demonised China and India as emerging geostrategic challengers to the United States.¹¹⁰ However, on topics such as the September 11 attacks Klare's solutions reflect the New Left emphasis on international cooperation rather than offering specific insights.¹¹¹

Conclusions and Further Research

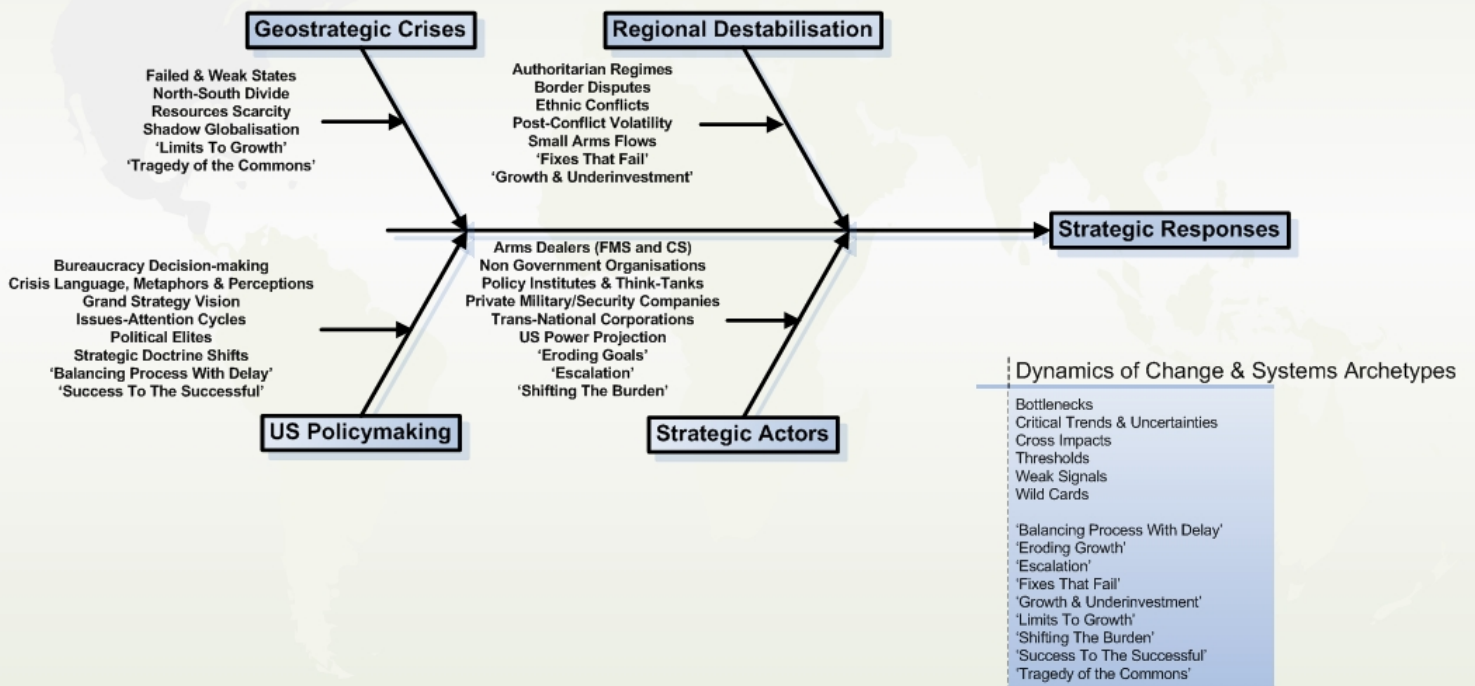
This essay has provided an introductory overview of Michael Klare's research contributions, the key themes in his work, and the epistemic shifts in Security Studies from the neo-realist school to emerging critical and world paradigms. These epistemic shifts reflect changes in the international environment, reflections on security flashpoints and hotspots, and the cross-pollination of security worldviews with activist, critical theory and peace studies discourses. One major theme to emerge is that despite different Administrations and Presidential declarative statements, Klare identifies the underlying themes in US strategic thinking about the geostrategic dimensions, the democratisation of other nation-states, and the critical role of energy security in decision-making.

Further research needs to be undertaken on several issues that this essay briefly raises. In-depth profiles of Security and Strategic Studies scholars could generate new innovations in pedagogy, discourse creation and theory-building. Although Klare mentions ideas from linguistics and systems thinking, further application of these methodologies could lead to more nuanced models of international relations dynamics, particularly the role of bureaucratic decision-making processes. The thematic issues explored above could be further expanded upon, particularly the current debate on oil geopolitics, resource wars and the 'peak oil' hypothesis. Finally, the comparisons with other strategic analysts suggest a convergence of viewpoints on potential solutions at the nation-state and international level to contemporary security problems.

Appendix 1: Michael Klare Mind Map



Appendix 2: Geostrategic Analysis



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² The North American Congress on Latin America explains its origins during the Vietnam War on its Internet site: "NACLA was founded in November 1966 to examine and debate the official and mainstream coverage of the Johnson Administration's April 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic. A number of students, scholars and activists concerned about U.S. intervention in the Americas got together to uncover the logic of that invasion and, they wrote at the time, "to identify and explain those elements and relationships of forces in the United States and Latin America which inhibit and frustrate urgently needed profound social and economic change." NACLA was born of the belief that through careful study, the "elements and relationships" of injustice could be revealed, and once revealed, opposed by an informed public." <<http://www.nacla.org/about.php#origins>> [14 May 2006].

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