

whether this policy could come back to haunt the U.S. in the future. Others pointed out that the U.S. government had no other choice than to include such regimes – without them the effort to combat terrorism world-wide would fail.

A point was made that handling the aftermath of the September 11 attacks is a major test for the U.S. as a world leader. If the U.S. administration handles the war on terrorism in a way that is perceived as just, the rest of the world may yet accept U.S. hegemony as benign. However, bungling the counter-terrorism effort would mean isolation for the U.S. and hostility by others. Some participants suggested that in order to maintain its moral leadership role in the Coalition, the U.S. government should develop a parallel track to the military campaign to address the link between human misery and terrorism/violence. Efforts should be made to “dry up the pipeline of terrorist sentiment.” In order to do so resources, equivalent to those allocated for the military campaign, should be dedicated to addressing poor social and economic conditions in the Middle East and in South Asia.

3. National Security

3.1. David Goldfisher (Graduate School of International Studies, Denver University)

David Goldfisher drew attention to the tendency of the media to compare the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan to the Vietnam war. He suggested that today, the context is entirely different: “Defeat would mean the end of America as we know it.” Premature withdrawal from Afghanistan and the global campaign against terrorism would open up the U.S. to unending terrorist attacks, which may be even more devastating if (or when) the terrorists gain access to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Homeland security has become crucial after the September 11 attacks, whereas it had been relegated in favour of offensive approaches to security until now. There are basically two reasons for this: First, since 1812 all wars in which the U.S. was engaged were fought off shore. Second, creating civil defence capability in the nuclear age may have unwittingly mobilised the public to oppose the build up of offensive nuclear arsenal. While a civil defence programme had been initiated during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it abruptly ended in hysteria. Similar attempts by the Reagan administration culminated in public demands for a Nuclear Freeze and disarmament, as predicted. **September 11 effectively ended the era of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and the reliance on offensive approaches to security. A new era of Assured Vulnerability has come of age, calling for defensive measures across the board.** In this context, Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) plans should be re-considered along with homeland defence.

Goldfisher said that the war against terrorism is taking place as the terms of “the haves” and the “have nots” fundamentally alter. Marxism and other left-wing ideologies offered systemic solutions to the “have nots” during the Cold War. Regimes rooted in the Marxist tradition (however misguided or authoritarian they may have been) promised improved material