

Techniques offensives et guerre économique – C. Harbulot

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The first issue of the cooperation between the AEGE (Association des anciens de l'École de Guerre Economique) and La Bourdonnaye éditions numériques is Christian Harbulot's venerable book : Techniques offensives et guerre économique. This book, written from an Aditech financed strategic study about the global economic warfare, was first published more than 20 years ago, in 1988, when the Berlin's Wall was still a tangible reality.

The world in those times was slightly different than today's. The USSR was still standing, even if the weaknesses of the Communism paradise appeared day to day more important, anticipating a chaotic and bitter end. Japan, as the actual China, was also seen as a conquering power, challenging the US supremacy over global economy. This very aggressive Japan, years before the Asian crisis of 1997, is very present in the book's analysis as it appears as the most growing power and the study of its strategy is the basis of the demonstration of economic warfare's reality, opportunities and threats.

Based on a strong alliance between the central state's global strategy and a developing economic sector (the former *zaibatsu* in the case of Japan) – common elements that can be found in the 20th century United States, the end-of-19th century Prussia or the 1960-90s Japan – the economic warfare offensive strategy often obtains spectacular results. Centered on information management and use, the new wealth of our world, the company's strategy – and also the state's – has to deeply integrate that competition isn't only a question of better product nor marketing. The offensive posture of certain actors, often Japanese in the book, lead them to use techniques issued from the intelligence community or even from subversive groups, often with success.

From the pre-capitalistic era, we arrives in what the author describes as a “no-war-no-peace status”, being close to Hobbes' war of all against all. This status, legacy of fifty years of Cold War geopolitical inaction, is today becoming more and more concrete with the globalization. If Christian Harbulot's book is today so accurate, it's because it analyzes the mechanism and leverages of power increase that can be used by a state or a company. At the times described in the book, the global economic competition didn't really concern USSR and the Eastern bloc that were only in international economy towards geopolitical instruments and intelligence services. Today we are living in the global interconnection of all the important economies inside a capitalistic system as certain emerging economies even if not very present in Christian Harbulot's analyze of 1988 : Turkey, India, Brazil or China. Certain actors, as Japan, also saw their global role decrease following the 1997 Asian crisis. Nevertheless, even with those economic changes, the essence of economic warfare was already well analyzed. This subtle comprehension of the merging of the state's international interests and the companies' leading to a global power increase is today the basis of a large number of

academic works leading to a sole aim: to explain the states and the companies that business is really war.