

The Emerging Storm: Preparing for the Next Gulf War

French Caldwell

When the effects of war are globalized to an extent that was not possible before the Internet, your enterprise needs to be ready. Our advice can help you be prepared.

ANALYSIS

What is the "emerging storm"? It's a metaphor for the confusion, conflict, and sometimes-violent clashes of interests and ideologies in a globalized world. During the 1990s, it seemed that nothing could stop IT-led globalization. However, we are beginning to learn that globalization has restrictions — limitations on trade; fears of the erosion of regional cultures; inadequate regulatory, legal and taxation frameworks; and challenges to the old order of global security.

What does the emerging storm have to do with IT? Most processes, companies and infrastructures on which modern society depends are global. Even small companies have offshore suppliers and service providers. Those supply and value chains are dependent on IT and, when geopolitical tensions escalate, the resulting effects are reflected in our networks and systems. Business operations that are dependent on global connectivity face risks. People under such pressure behave differently, too. Enterprises that are prepared with actionable plans for their people, processes and infrastructures will ride out crests of the higher-than-normal tensions of the emerging storm. However, as the "SQL Slammer" (aka Sapphire) worm showed in January 2003, those that are not prepared will face the storm with their windows open and suffer.

The emerging storm inevitably widens business performance gaps further, and coming up with solutions for vexing business problems will be a challenge for IT professionals. For example, consider these business barriers that can arise in a period of high geopolitical tensions:

- 1) Increased friction between friendly nations in a weak economy leads legislative bodies to introduce restrictions to trade in services.
- 2) Terrorist activities or acts of war lead to travel restrictions.
- 3) Customs refusing port entry to ships with improper manifests, slowing global supply chains.

In this Spotlight, Gartner can help you determine what changes are needed in your enterprise architecture to close the business performance gaps opened by geopolitical risks.

The emerging storm is bearing down quickly. It is time to "rig our ships" for heavy seas and ride into the storm, for there is no other choice. This decade is a time to absorb the rapid changes that occurred in the 1990s, to build new legal and regulatory structures, to introduce new social and work structures, and to refine IT-enabled global business models.

The final shape, size and duration of the emerging storm are unknown, but we can see the next big wave — a possible war with Iraq. This first set of emerging storm research discusses the critical immediate actions for enterprises that could be affected.

Featured Research

"Act Now to Minimize the Impact of War With Iraq" By Dan Miklovic

"The Last-Minute Checklist for Emergency Preparedness" By Roberta Witty

"CIOs, HR Executives: Prepare Your Workforce for War" By Diane Morello

"Reinforce Cyberdefenses Against 'Hactivism'" By Rich Mogull

"Offshore Outsourcing Vendor and Enterprise Action Items" By Dion Wiggins, Debashish Sinha and Rolf Jester

"Using the Internet to Distribute Operations in Wartime" By Kristian Steenstrup, John Girard and Dan Miklovic

"Telecommuting in Wartime: Draft a Remote-Access Program" By John Girard

"Tighten Global Supply Chains for War" By Robert Goodwin

Recommended Reading

"Global Aftershocks: What the Attack on America Means,"
www3.gartner.com/1_researchanalysis/focus/mobilization.html

"Aftermath: Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity,"
www3.gartner.com/1_researchanalysis/focus/aftermath.html

"Building the Resilient Virtual Organization,"
www3.gartner.com/1_researchanalysis/focus_areas/special_reports/rvo/rvo.html

"'Digital Pearl Harbor': Defending Your Critical Infrastructure,"
www3.gartner.com/pages/story.php.id.2727.s.8.jsp

"Offshore Sourcing: Managing War Risks," www3.gartner.com/pages/story.php.id.2359.s.8.jsp

"September 11 — One Year Later," www3.gartner.com/pages/story.php.id.2301.s.8.jsp

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