

Foro de Seguridad XXV Foro Económico

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FIGHTING AGAINST TERRORISM

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, for me, it is a pleasure and an honor being here today. First, I would like to express, my gratitude to the organization for allowing me to have this opportunity; I'm aware of the outstanding level of this forum.

I would like to focus my intervention on the four following items: the no military dimension of the problem, the narratives as the main problem of the terrorism, the need to strengthen the state as a solution against insurgence and terrorism and the lack of military value of lonely wolves phenomena.

The world is not any longer sealed; there is not any watertight compartment inside. It is worthy because it generates synergetic benefits. However, the problems aren't local anymore; they are from the Humankind as a whole.

In fact, Globalization is not a pacific phenomenon; it is violent because it tends to uniformity on the grounds of the most powerful culture. Globalization has made distances not relevant. In fact, places as the internet are common spaces, global commons, so there are also common borders for all countries.

Conflicts happen among people who are in touch. Until the 20th century, war happened between countries belonging to the same culture and it was usually a clash of wills solved in the battlefield. Now it happens among countries of different culture and the place to solve the problems is not the battlefield any more.

Wars are clashes between wills not clashes between identities. There is not a solution after the battle, because the problem belongs to another dimension, the problem still remains, except in the extreme case of annihilation. Actually, there is not a military problem which deserves that name. War in Afghanistan or against DAESH could be solved with just more strength; if necessary with 4 million people as after Normandy or even using nuclear weapons as it happened against Japan.

But, once you get the victory you have to decide what you are going to do after: To win is not to solve. Again, the problem is not to get the victory but to achieve peace, which is a very different goal, political not military. The political reason of any war is always a new peace.

The key element to solve the problem is to strengthen the state as a way to strengthen society within the problem really exists. Military mission in the 21st century basically consists on containing violence while the state is being built. But this war is against an insurgence that used terrorism as a tool, not against a classical terrorist group.

Ladies and gentlemen, describing a phenomenon like terrorism is extremely difficult because the wide range of activities that could be classified as terrorist. Actually, it could be defined as the use of a certain level of violence to reach a political objective. Let's say it is politics with some bloodshed.

The fight of terrorism is about legitimacy. Authority is strength with legitimacy, violence is strength without legitimacy. As a country, the main target is to save your life better than to kill your enemy. So, it is more important to defend own center of gravity than to destroy the one from the enemy; it is more important to maintain own legitimacy than to defeat terrorism. It is not worth paying a political price to get only a tactical advantage. It is against Clausewitz's equation. It is worse than a crime; it is a mistake.

Even more, in most cases, dirty fight is not able to produce the victory, because this is a tactical fight and victory is at political level. So, being unable to achieve victory, it compromises the core value to be defended: legitimacy.

War is a clash of powers, but terrorism don't because terrorist groups are great pretenders, they are fiction of power. Terrorism is warfare fiction. The unique real power is the state power; if it is a democracy, the joint will of millions of people. That is real, not noise. It is slow and it seems falsely weak, but no shortcuts must be taken.

Another key factor to be taken into account is that the center of gravity of terrorism is properly neither the violence - the attack- nor the terrorist, but the narrative generated throughout the terrorist attacks. Narrative is the backbone of terrorism. It links, speech, cause and violence. They are emotional not rational and they generate the moral space which allows violence. They used a selected past to explain the wished future. They are ideologies, so a selection of facts and approaches. They key issue is not what they say, but what they do not, what they deliberately ignore.

There is not a reactive policy which deserves the name of policy. They just obtain a certain advantage in the response. The action reaction policy works. The terrorism uses action reaction strategies. You cannot react as it intends. Terrorism is offensive, anyway, any means. If it loses initiative, it is over. If you do not do anything unusual, it is over as well. It is hard but necessary.

So, to beat terrorism you need to lighten what they ignore to force them to take these facts into account. Acting in such a way you are dismantling its speech, because it is very simple- the simplicity of its message helps terrorism from the perspective of communication – but do not offer real solutions, it is emotional not rational. 21th century problems are really complex, they cannot be embraced by a simply speech.

Fighting terrorism must be made through police but this can just prevent it from spreading but not contain it definitively. The key battle is against terrorism narrative. This must be made from politics. As a first measure you need a narrative, not a counter narrative, this a reaction, an error you need to overwhelm it. You need your own narrative, a better narrative which absorbs the causes of terrorism and link political, media and tactical levels of decision. At the same time, you need lighten the elements that are not taken into account by terrorism to weaken its speech. So terrorism is made throughout a pedagogy and time, and you need to do the same tactic.

The problem is not the strength of the terrorist group but the weakness of the state; furthermore, the weakness of the society who suffers from this disease. Strengthen the State is a way to strengthen the society the place in which is the real problem.

Ladies and gentlemen, finally I would like to talk about RADICALIZATION and LONELY WOLVES.

Without a doubt, the contact among different worlds generates identities problems from the very beginning, but these problems are especially tough for the second generation of immigrants. These people think they have no country, they feel to belong to nowhere. They have adaptation problems, they do not feel comfortable, at easy, anywhere. They doubt about their own grounds. The whole personality building is shaken for these axiological doubts. This is even harder for small criminals, offenders who are in prison for small crimes (smugglers, burglars...). These inmates, who serves for not to many years in prison, needs to rebuild its personality, anyway, any cost. They need hope whatever the cost may be.

Terrorist narratives give them a new chance; they offer them a possibility for rebuilding their lives and forgiving their old sins. They let them act as new heroes, new models to be imitated something unexpected up to this very moment. Even more, they have the chance of going to a special place of heaven from this tears' valley and let their family be proud of them, as they never felt.

Lonely wolves or individual actors come directly from this atmosphere. People with not hope, desperate, who are offered new lives suddenly, recruited directly from the slums.

The internet has shown to be a marvelous tool for these purposes; and not only for these. The internet has become to be the open university of yihadist. They have not to move to far away countries for training. They can receive a basic training directly at home, without any additional cost,

and even without the police to suspect. They can act directly with homemade weapons.

This is very important because from that moment on, it is an internal security affair. They have broken the State security, a very important step forward in their terrorist purposes.

But lonely wolves' strategy has very serious cons. They are not trained enough for their actions. They do not have chances of doing severe attacks; they have just the chance of attacking simple targets. There is not a good link (or even a linkage) with the central terrorist group they support. They just may know some guidelines to act. So their capability to cause damage is much reduced.

Warfare is organized violence. A violence with a rhythm and a clear political target. Lonely wolf violence is not organized violence, it is just noise. Of course it is valuable from the political point of view or from the media one, but not from the military. From the military point of view, it does not deserve any kind of interest.

Of course, security is a feeling and feelings are more emotional than rational. In the Second World War, Londoners would be happy if they were bombed just one time every single night. If President Regan had been said that these people would be the enemy 30 years later, he would have been very pleased and happy.

We have these enemies because we do not have others. But, as long as they would not be able to get weapons of mass destruction, we can feel sure. They are too far away from us to worry deeply.

But prevention is paramount and this phenomena must be coped to avoid it becomes greater and even more dangerous. Problems must be solved from its roots. Human beings are very adaptive and, in the end, dangerous.

Thank you very much