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REFLECTIONS ON THE EMPLOYMENT
OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST LOCAL TERRORISM

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REFLECTIONS ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST LOCAL TERRORISM

Abstract:

The use of the Armed Forces in the fight against local terrorism allows significant benefits to be obtained at the operational and tactical level. Nevertheless, it incorporates severe political tolls in an issue whose key is not properly military but political. Hence, its use as a corner stone in a conflict must be carefully weighted.

Resumen:

La utilización de las Fuerzas Armadas en la lucha contra el terrorismo local permite obtener notables beneficios en el plano operacional y táctico pero incorpora severos peajes políticos en un asunto cuya clave, contra cualquier apariencia, es precisamente política y no propiamente militar. Su uso como actor primordial debe ser cuidadosamente ponderado.

Keywords:

Armed Forces, terrorism, dirty war, legitimacy, violence.

Palabras clave:

Fuerzas Armadas, terrorismo, guerra sucia, legitimidad, violencia.

DEMOCRACY, TERRORISM AND ARMED FORCES.

The first necessary thing to solve a conflict is to understand it, to grasp its nuances. Violence, strength, is not its essence even if, when it appears –more often than not– it constitutes its more visible manifestation and overshadows everything else. The key element, the central point for the analysis, is the political aim it serves, the rationality that underlies hidden behind violence, its purpose.

Certainly, democracy covers up an overwhelming force: the concerted will of millions of people. And it happens that while lost in the heat of the battle, sometimes this fact is forgotten despite its capital nature. Frequently, the base action-reaction spiral of terrorist groups' strategies is a good example of the natural aspect of this carelessness. This handy tactic is simply used because it works.

Terrorism incites people to overreaction, to excess, to the loss of rationality and to the misunderstanding in the assessment of the scenario; terrorism is provocation. In this context, it could be affirmed –and History, which always teaches us, would back this assertion– that terrorism's fight against democracy can only prosper if mistakes are made when trying to stop it. The reaction is more dangerous than the action that causes it. Certainly, there is nothing worse than accepting and assuming the enemies' proposals.

In this context, the action by the State is weaker and delayed, it seems to be inefficient and can incite those agents that combat it to take shortcuts. The State always goes behind events, never ahead of them. That slowness is the price that shall inevitably be paid in order to manage such an immense power.

Democracy is something more than the rule of law, elections or a system of checks and balances –which also it is. It is, before all, an ethics, a culture, that establishes the space that goes from the rule to its implementation, a way of doing things, as well as a permanent state of deliberation between rulers and those governed that guarantees a concerted answer. As the count Saint Exupery stated "*what is essential is invisible to the eye*".

Therefore, at many times, adversary methods cannot be acceptable, cannot be assimilated by democracies in the name of legitimacy, of self-preservation or coherence, ultimately, because of their conception of freedom¹. In this line, Schmitt defended

¹ De Pablo Pardo, Luis María Prologue to Mao Tse Tung's book. La Guerra de Guerrillas. Editorial Huemul S.A. Buenos Aires 1996, p 19.

“In a partisan battle a complexly structured new space of action emerges because the partisan does not fight on an open field of battle..., he forces his enemy into another space. From underground, he disturbs the conventional and regular game on the open stage. On the basis of his irregularity, he alters dimensions not only of tactical, but of strategic operations of the regular army.”²

The Weberian definition of the State as the holder of the legitimate monopoly on violence cannot overshadow the fact that its use in a real democracy is, or shall be, residual, as the price is measured in term of legitimacy, whether it is against common criminals or terrorists. Power is potency, not act. Its secret rests in its little utilization, as its use wears it out more than it appears. It is a totem.

The question does not lie in the military or other sort of nature of the force used, taking into account that a militarized democracy is as bad as a police one –if a democracy can actually deserve such a name. The question rests in the damage inflicted from resorting to force in order to legitimize a regime, which also causes the deconstruction of societies where it is established. Democracy is the triumph of civil society, its full development. To win, terrorism needs to weaken the society it acts against; the greater the strength of society, the more unlikely the terrorist victory is.

The fight against terrorism is a collision of ethics –a space referred to the means, not to the ends– where one can only get dirty, as the terrorist, exceptionally alleging its weak situation, escapes from any restriction imposed by morality.

Nevertheless, the State remains as a hostage of the ethic it proclaims. Nonetheless, the terrorist will pay the price by his actions at the end, –and more if he does not achieve his objectives– and not only in prison terms, but also in the political arena, after having stained with blood its narrative. *“Lose to win”*, in accordance with San Pablo; but it is essential to know how to lose and to control oneself –that is the key. As the book of the Ecclesiastic reminds us, the secret of wisdom is discipline.

The difference of powers is not decisive. Given that the terrorist –with his ways of combatting– tries to influence his government decisions and public opinion, it is of more relevance to the State to defend its own center of gravity than to attack its rival.

Besides, what terrorism tries is to undermine the fighting will of its counterparts. It is not about military colonization to control a territory, but about mental colonization with a view to exercising control over a society by the multiplier effect of the media.

² Schmitt, Carl. “Theory of the Partisan” in [The Concept of the Political](#).

Before tackling the debate on the role of the Armed Forces in the direct fight against terrorism, first it is necessary to define the process against which it is expected to act. Then, this analysis document will analyze the consequences of the entry of the Armed Forces in different fields. Hence, first of all, it will analyze the consequences of dealing with the conflict against terrorism inside the Armed Forces, in the terrorist group and in its social base, and in the society they serve, and goes on to consider the point of view of international society before reaching a conclusion.

THE EXPRESSIVE VIOLENCE OF TERRORISM. THE NARRATIVE

Terrorism is, however illegitimate it may be, a tool of politics. We can define it as the media use (or the threat of it) of violence in support of a specific political project. If war is an act of communication, dialectic with a supplement of violence, terrorism is a political activity staged by some bloodshed. With it, it aims to kidnap the imagination of the group that witnesses as spectators but that, in fact, is also included in the play being represented.

For that purpose, terrorism measures out and modulates violence in homeopathic doses attacking the nodes of the society and the State in order to cause its transformation. Its acts are actions of high symbolic content that aim to show the capacity and representativeness of the group that presents itself as the armed wing of a society (or of part of it) and expression of its legitimate will.

This is the reason why terrorist groups separate from the political parties they come from. They try to free them from the responsibility of their acts and, hence, to avoid damaging their legitimacy while they incorporate their interests. Terrorism is negation; not construction. It must be part of a broader strategy which includes other groups with whom it achieves a never explicit symbiosis.

Clearly, terrorism cannot be decisive in that it cannot impose its opinion, staging a media strategy (it matches the measures of the media; its actions have the dimensions in terms of depth and width of the lens of a camera), a power which, in reality, it does not possess; that is why terrorism is war fiction in the same way as it is power fiction.

It is only viable when it becomes visible and it is taken into consideration; it does not aspire to defeat its opponent –it does not possess a military capacity, as its reduced number is capable of operating (the secret obliges), but not for defeating. Furthermore, it does not have the intellectual nor human ability to manage its victory –but just an image, a photograph. It is theatre, fiction; it is emotionality.

Terrorism means extreme offensive and it implies tactical actions that affect directly the political level. Its actions go beyond its objective. That means, an over politicization of its acts is produced, as a result of the Dionysian elements it carries within it, with an emotionality that aims to exceed any level including the ethic one, which makes of the “*direct action*” an extremely efficient activity. Violence and media pressure are linked; hence, terrorism resorts to discontinuous showdowns of terror that last in time.

In order to defeat this enemy, first of all we must ask ourselves, from a Clausewitzian point of view, which is its center of gravity. Clearly, not its capacities, though also to some extent (by suppressing its means it is possible to end with this phenomenon, even if the human collective that backs it cannot be dissolved; maybe at first it was feasible, but its risk assessment normally is not appropriate). Its activity does not pretend to destroy, but to cause an equivocal reaction to question legitimacy and to foster its speech while weakening the opponent.

Therefore, the key lies in an evanescent question as legitimacy is. Force with legitimacy is authority; and it degrades to mere violence when it does not count with it. The key to the terrorist action, its backbone, lies in its narrative, where action, message and cause are linked; a means that forms part of the message and that serves to gather around it the target population and the real objective of the fight. Narratives are not rational, but emotional; they are constructed on the base of perceptions, common places and lines of arguments that pretend to express a reality sensed over the promise of a better world.

A narrative is always a selection of events that leads to a pre-established imaginarium, an equilibrium between reality and fiction. A conglomerate of ideas, not false but incomplete; it can be an ideology, a religion... They are not a neutral or objective fact. Its function is to make reality intelligible by means of a deliberate simplification; it is a vision of the world –despite its biased approach and the extravagant reference point from which it sets off. Terrorism is just a bloody narrative.

Narratives are also characterized by reductionism, management of silences, the lack of observation, the deliberate ignorance of what contradicts them or does not support them. Hence their enlightened coherence, from which the vast majority of human acts are absent.

The truth, a little attractive prosaicism or a non-suggestive dataset, are not the definitive criteria of assessment, but the emotion of an exciting proposal (despite being sort of unrealistic). It is an act of creation, of will, that incorporates rational and irrational elements. It is a mechanism for the construction of identity, an instrument of socialization. For that

reason, it is not immutable in its form. It changes in order to maintain the substance inalterable; it evolves and it adapts itself by incorporating elements of the present that connect with its proposal for the future. They count on a capacity for reinterpreting the events as well as themselves, in order to maintain an emotional coherence with the ends.

They are romantic but not universalist nor rationally symmetrical; they always set off from a happy arcadia that allows to explain the future by using the past; or, to be more exact, they rewrite the past in the name of the future. If a reference does not serve, frankly, another is looked for; the important thing is to preserve the mobilizing future, the dynamic.

Narratives do not describe reality, but they create it, generating the ethic space necessary for violence: terrorists need an ethic in order to live with the violence they carry with. If narratives did not exist, terrorists would go from being managers of violence to incorporate them into their lives degrading themselves before the group and also before them, to the condition of criminals, or even worse, of psychopaths.

In the modern world, to side against something is easier to explain. Its simplicity, the insistent reiteration of its message and an undoubted staging, all confer an advantage from the perspective of the political communication.

Irrationally, terror can end up taking possession of the population. Hence, it can oblige to accept terrorist demands or to request a disproportionate protection at the expense of other risks –even to the detriment of freedom–; in any case, the only loser is always the citizen.³

The way of separating the people from its government lies in destabilizing the State by trying to force it to show its most coercive nature. Therefore, its answer becomes a revulsive that helps to crystallize the aspirations of part of the targeted population and it causes its mobilization.

THE ARMED FORCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

If, on one hand, the use of the Armed Forces in direct tasks on the fight against terrorism could involve important benefits at the levels of operational and tactical decisions, on the other hand, it entails significant risks in the political arena.

Certainly, it is common that military men do not like to be passive subjects when the

³ Ruiz García, Juan Manuel. “La teoría política del terror”. *Revista Sociedad y Utopía* nº 19/2002, p. 175.

fatherland is at risk, or better said, when it is presented as weak and defenseless facing terrorist's malice. They do not even want to suffer in this situation of inactivity the provocative scratch of terrorism. The wish of participating in this fight is inherent to their heart. There is not –and I would even say– there cannot be other option. The positions that entitle “*better risk and fatigue*” are the ones that their ethic and their willingness for public services demand. It is in their genes.

The participation in the fight against terrorism can satisfy the emotional and volitional aspects of the institution and keep it away from passivity. Furthermore, this fight makes them useful and justifies –contributing to the visualization of the State's capacity and power– that the action of terrorists is permanently questioned and, from the moment of their entrance onto the scene, it clearly stays.

However, it is necessary to understand that the Armed Forces act at the military level, whether the terrorists, despite appearances, develop their activity in the political sphere (tactical actions designed to influence politically), two different levels –though not at all as they share common spaces.

First of all, with the intervention of the Armed Forces, normally an astonishing improvement of the tactical and operational situation of the current security conditions is generally produced. Security is restored while at the same time the State regains the public space, or at least, a significant portion of it.

Nevertheless, the symbolism that accompanies the military power can collaterally contribute to the legitimation of the terrorist groups insofar as an exceptional action by the State is unusual in fighting common criminals. Recognition of its capacity, of its representativeness, of its social support is, de facto, happening. Because of the importance of their enemies you will recognize them.

In general, 21st conflicts are not fought with a big use of fire, but over a slow fire, without a clear beginning or ending, while the dividing line between the belligerent parties, on one hand, and organized crime, on the other, is more and more diffuse.

This is a fight about pitting the most visible against the invisible, in which the old legal aphorism that states “*he who can do more, can do less*” does not necessarily obey. Moreover, despite the initial improvement caused by the entry of the Armed Forces, it does not solve the problems inherent in the political dimension of the fight, even if it can smother some of its fires.

The problem does not rest in winning the “war”, as the military problem of the struggle is already solved. Terrorists do not count with the minimum necessary capacities to fight against the Armed Forces; hence, the problem is located at another level, in “winning peace” by the political defeat of the terrorist proposal, by the dismantling of their narrative and by the disengagement of their social base over which it proclaims itself conscience and avenging lightning.

Victory cannot be mistaken with peace. The former is the military end of the conflict while the latter expresses its definitive political resolution –which can hardly be attained only by this way, except if the terrorist group completely lacks of a social base.

Victory does postpone the conflict in many cases, pushing it ahead over time, but it does not solve it. And when the pressure is reduced or, as Clausewitz predicted, when terrorists adapt to the new circumstances and find the more accurate way to act against the State, the problem will arise again and the conditions for its resolution will be even worse –if possible.

Furthermore, the Armed Forces neither have a specific doctrine to develop this kind of operations, nor they have been trained for them; and, in addition, their work culture is completely different. They are military, not police men –with other values, other perceptions of the world, other merits, other aspirations–, although sometimes they can act like them. Therefore, in the Algerian war, the general Massu stated: “*Paratroopers have always insisted they were given a job that was not of their competence, a police task no one has prepared them for, and that facing the dilemma between them and us, they chose the obvious option.*”⁴

The absence of discrimination contributes to spread the psychological fear whose effects are disproportionate when it comes to material damage⁵. If a selection is not done, the defensive answer runs the risk of not doing it as well; all individuals of a society are suspicious and, as a result, the community bonds are dissolved, as a community does not exist if there is no trust⁶.

Consequently, the job to do could be classified as not-invasive surgery (or at least; or even better, to be expelled from their own social group): to extract the subversive elements of the social core where they try to hide without harming it. It is necessary to avoid, in any case, that the part is confused with the whole, and the ends with the means. And that does not only require preparation and skills, but a culture, a doctrine and a specific ability the soldier

⁴ Own translation. For more information please consult: Pizarro Pizarro, José A. La Guerra de Indochina punto de inflexión de la historia militar contemporánea. Tesis doctoral Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Geografía e Historia 2007, p. 432.

⁵ David, Charles-Philippe. La guerra y la paz. Icaria, Barcelona 2008, p. 139.

⁶ Aron, Raymond. Paz y guerra entre las naciones. Ministerio de Defensa, Madrid 1993, pp. 213-214.

is not necessarily prepared for. It is a work of professionals, of policemen.

Besides, the military man does not like these chiaroscuro areas; there is no nobility in the conflict, and should not be expected. In the words of T.E. Lawrence *“war upon rebellion was messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife.”*⁷

In fact, the kind of conflict even obliges the soldier to carry tasks of internal intelligence, which is far from a culture established on loyalty, obedience and partnership. The military man, in general, does not properly understand the vileness and wickedness inherent to the terrorist action; it escapes from its culture and perception of the world. All of this, plus the serious cultural and ethical problems that arise and the contradictions under he develops its activity, can end up undermining his morality.

In addition, this incapacity for definitely resolving a conflict that spreads out over time can cause the loss of equanimity and mistakes when trying to obtain results in the short-term (which is normally the usual framework of their work) while at the same time frustration and exasperation in the collective, making it easy to fall in the undesired spiral of action reaction (action repression). The Armed Forces can be, hence, seen as foes of the part of the society the terrorists say they are representing.

It is essential to avoid reactive politics, to be provoked, to obey to financial imperatives –a very possible aspect as the big ones do not normally know how to do little *“wars”*; they have not been designed neither structurally nor cyclical for them, and they do not even count with the needed patience. It is not a visceral fight, but one located between starkly and implacable reasons.

TERRORISTS’ ATTITUD AND SUPPORT GROUPS

For the terrorist group, the entry of the Armed Forces in the fight means the verification of their discredit proposals. This, to the inverse of the Armed Forces, is paid in operative terms, but its interests are achieved in the political sphere. It means a victory to the extent that its capacities are recognized when it forces the State to commit an exceptional action.

The operative weakening of terrorists, the pressure, serves to unite the group and, what is more important, it strengthens their discourse, while giving it a visibility and the international attention is attracted.

⁷ Lawrence, T.E. Los siete pilares de la sabiduría. Editorial Óptima, Barcelona 2000, p. 154. This sentence gives its name to the John A. Nagl's book Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. University Press 2005, p XII.

Its action is oriented towards the exploitation of the non-military flaws of the opponent, the violent use of the State of Law and International Law's constrictions, the searching of the social collapse of the enemy by resorting to small entity's operations or the prolongation of operations, giving victory to the one that *"knew to resist for more time, to stand more casualties and to keep his faith in victory"*.⁸ In the words of Raymond Aron *"the guerrillas win the war when they do not lose it and those who fight against them lose if they do not win it."*⁹ Terrorists are highly motivated.

The tactic situation, mainly at the beginning, worsens for them, which, invariably, they try to present as the cause of the abusive and repressive nature of the State, questioning its legitimacy and the submission of its acts to the democratic values by the permanent denounce before both the national and international society, while they try to achieve the recognition of the status.

Furthermore, violence creates new violence, and it tries to expand its limits while it invokes what Clausewitz called the isomorphism of military strategies, the trend –the impulse– of the parties to mutually resemble between them, the attempt of terrorists to turn into or to be in a level with the military men, won at the narrative level.

While State agents feel the same impulse but in the name of efficiency –the military world belongs to the tangible sphere; the military man prefers to see and touch instead of smelling and tasting, and he wants short-term results–, for acting as terrorists, it can make them lose what they already have and others need: once again, the legitimacy. It is the inverse to the rise to the Clausewitzian extremes –the dialect trend to the use of all the possible force in a conflict–; it is, following the same logic, a descent to the negligible.

Terrorism is a dual nature threat –civil and military– and it incites to a military answer¹⁰. Taking into account that, at the military level, terrorism is dialectic, they try to benefit from the rebound effect¹¹, in ethical and propaganda terms.

Hence, terrorists try to identify themselves with the military, winning points in the narrative battle, while they act without subduing to their constraints by adducing their exceptional weakness situation. This, together with the characteristic victimhood that contributes to the

⁸ Pizarro Pizarro, José A. La Guerra de Indochina punto de inflexión de la historia militar contemporánea. Tesis doctoral Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Geografía e Historia 2007, p. 465.

⁹ Own translation. For more information please consult: Aron, Raymond. Pensar la Guerra, Clausewitz. T. II. p. 197

¹⁰ Diamint, Rut. "Misiones militares." en S. Tulchin, Joseph (coord.). La seguridad desde las dos orillas. Ediciones Bellaterra, Barcelona 2006, p. 67.

¹¹ Ignatieff, Michael. El mal menor. Editorial Taurus, Madrid 2005, p. 90.

reinforcement before their support group (in which they present themselves as conscience), exhibiting the State and its Armed Forces as if they were occupying forces completely alien to the society in whose name they say to act.

Therefore, when at the end of the 70s, the British Armed Forces operated in the Ulster as a peacekeeping force before the development of an escalation of violence, the IRA showed that they were not neutral forces after the detention of hundreds of Catholics in 1971, when just a few were accused. They are the risks of an answer the terrorist tries to use in order to legitimate his cause by adding it to his monologue, which implies an extremely thoughtful and careful use.

Moreover, the British Army action after the Easter Rising of 1916 in Ireland and the executions that followed it, turned those who could have been presented as dangerous for the community and for themselves into martyrs, as well as clumsy and incompetents. Ireland's independence is linked to this repressive action. Poet Yeats knew to capture that moment.

*Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death.
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead.
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse --
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,*

*Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.*¹²

SOCIETY

Societies are morality factories insofar as they define when (and when not) violence is right and proportionate, depending on their adaptation (or not) to the current cultural patterns. Its consent is essential in the fight against terrorism as they establish the framework in which the battle should take place. Furthermore, it is the society, its will, the one that defines its own victory or defeat.

For society, the Armed Forces intervention in the fight against terrorism initially generates a sense of relief as a result of the quickly improvement of the security conditions. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the counter-terrorism fight associated to the expansion of the limits of violence implies the risks of “*securitizing*” other aspects of the country’s social life, occupying even more political space and militarizing the State with evident harm for the democratic legitimacy –which is the key value to preserve, the element that gives strength and consistence to its proceeding.

The extension of the conflict transforms the exceptional in the norm, generating cutbacks in rights and difficulties for the quotidian life while sacrifices are imposed; the loss of perspective can be the cause of the carelessness of the non-operative aspects of the conflict, otherwise inherent and essential to any civil society. This process can end in a strong social contestation.

Hence, the control and assessment of the situation must be extremely strict before the risk that the State ends up getting used to work in a different line to its basic underlying principles. Therefore, within an environment of excess, actions contrary to the defended principles that go beyond the residual use of force every democracy is forced to can arise.

Nonetheless, quick solutions do not solve anything because they go always against the manifestation of the phenomena, which is violence, and not against its gravity center that, as it has been showed, is located at the narrative level, scarifying the capital value: the ethics. This means to subordinate politics to the tactic in actions that are not decisive in themselves and that, most of the time, they do not even contribute to the conflict’s

¹² Available at

<http://books.google.es/books?id=76Ot5FPTVlgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=yeats+poems&hl=en&sa=X&ei=xkxaVOj-OMzesATDwIDADw&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=terrible&f=false> (Yeats, W.B. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*)

resolution and they equal the parties ethically. In addition, the Armed Forces of a democracy, neither culturally nor technically, are prepared for the systematic use of an inappropriate methodology. A critical factor, its morality, its will, would be very resentful. And the legitimacy of the cause would suffer even more.

In a democracy, “*State Terrorism*” does not exist. If anything, there can be “*Government Terrorism*” if State civil servants, acting against law, are implicated in these activities. These facts cannot be apologized in any way, and the State is obliged to use all its force in its repression in order to avoid being committed.

Besides, the primacy of the military runs the risk of transforming the Armed Forces in a type of idol, who deserves all the worship and reputation, a space beyond the necessary critics and counterweight. This makes the institutions to paralyze and it leads to, at a given time, its abrupt and traumatic demystification and, what it is even worse, ending up subordinating politics to the tactic and distorting once again Clausewitz famous equation. As the Comte de Mirabeau stated: “*Prussia is not a country with an army but an army with a country*”.

We must not forget that the word terrorism has state origins as it is associated to the revolutionary period under the hegemony of Robespierre and the almighty Committee of Public Safety; its name comes from a discourse given by that one who united virtue and terror: “*virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is impotent*”. In this way, ideology –virtue– stays inextricably associated to the means –terror– in a dangerous symbiosis that equated them. The famous “*Law of Suspects*”¹³ of the time made any marked man guilty by the mere fact of being one, being identified as implacable foes of a social group. And all of this was made in the sacrosanct name of freedom.

Therefore, as France in Algeria could neither decisively defeat nor bring back the Army to the metropolis, its public opinion got jaded of it and the withdrawal was finally imposed. A liberal democracy does not make war against its own principles and against the will of those who does not want to be dominated, those who are impossible to be assimilated and that no terror act could turn them into the French patriotism¹⁴. The key of the problem was more

¹³ “Article 1. Immediately after the publication of the present decree, all the suspects in the Republic who are still at liberty will be placed under arrest. Article 2. Suspects are deemed to be: 1º. Those who whether by their conduct, their liaisons, speech or writings have shown themselves to be adherents of tyranny, federalism, or enemies of liberty. 2º. Those who cannot justify their means of livelihood and the fulfilment of their civic duties. 3º. Those who have been refused *certificats de civisme*. 4º. Public functionaries suspended or dismissed from their jobs by the National Convention or by its commissioners and not reinstated. 5º. Those former nobles, including the husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons or daughters of *émigrés*, who have not constantly displayed their devotion to the Revolution. 6º. Those who have emigrated since 1 July 1789, even though they have returned to France. [...]”

¹⁴ Aron, Raymond. *Pensar la Guerra, Clausewitz*. T. II. p. 176.

political than military. The Muslim population –due to persuasion or terror– took side of the rebels, an enemy the colonials could not distinguish.¹⁵

When Troy destroyed its walls to allow the entry of a horse built as a gift for a hostile goddess, it turned, following tradition –as when Romulus killed Remus¹⁶– and just because of that act, into a foe of itself. A State cannot be hostile to a portion of its society –it goes against its inclusive essence. The aim is to combat terrorists avoiding that assumption. The distinction between one and others constitutes a critic and basic need, and it has to be very explicit; this is a serious and delicate problem. As the biblical dictum states in words of Jesus Christ: *“Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand”*.

We should not try to confront neither forces nor discourses. Besides, the own discourse does not require to be confronted as terrorists claim. It must be a better discourse, an inclusive narrative, an offer that accepts and overcomes the narrative of the others, as well as solving its demands. Democracy is the key (that is its function); it is again, and on this occasion due to operative reasons, the key value to be preserved in this conflict, avoiding the collapse of the hope and the break of a society that can stop believing in itself because of the spiral of mistrust generated by terrorism.

Victory is always of a strong society, not of a strong State (although it is also). If the society is strong and the State weaknesses, society will change it and nothing will happen. In France, the monarchy was followed by the 1st Republic, the Consulate, the Empire, the monarchy, the 2nd Republic... anything society required. And doubting about oneself does not mean to be weak, but westerner. In fact, the doubt is the base of the Western progress. The absence of doubts is a characteristic of ignorant people, Taliban... who cannot be taken as an example.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The direct use of military power in the fight against terrorism is an issue that unavoidable calls the attention of the international community and, consequently, contributes to the visualization of the conflict, which turns into a focus of interest for international society sensitized by proved excesses –in some way placed in parallel–, and that remains watchful through thousands of different eyes –ones for, others actively against and resorting to the

¹⁵ Pizarro Pizarro, José A. La Guerra de Indochina punto de inflexión de la historia militar contemporánea. Tesis doctoral Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Geografía e Historia 2007, p. 432

¹⁶ Romulus, for delimiting Rome, marked out a territory with a plow at the Palatin hill and swore that he would kill anyone that would dare to cross it. Remus disobeyed him and crossed the line contemptuously. Hence, his brother killed him and he remained as the only and first King of Rome.

means, some manipulated by terrorists– in the face of any disproportionate action. Doubts emerge and everyone has an opinion.

The reason for that can be found in the shared conviction that the non-respect of the UN's principles and compromises freely accepted, especially in the human rights scope, affects peace and international stability. The problem of an effective development of human rights is linked with a global conception of the security of interest for the international community, it is the *"responsibility to protect"*, the limits of the one-time sacrosanct principle of sovereignty.

In fact, one of the terrorists' aims is the internationalization of the conflict whenever it means an extension of the framework within it is developed. When the framework is extended, the difference among the parties' capacities dissolves while new actors that are susceptible of changing –thanks to their intervention– the composition of the current forces entered the scene.

This same international community, when it looks at the conflict, cannot avoid seeing in it two perfectly differentiated parties and looking for *"neutrality"* tries to understand the other one –for that, it is necessary to get closer, to step into one's shoes–, which means, from the start, apart from the exporting of the speech, a plus of publicity and legitimacy. The clearly weak, the freedom fighters, being wrong or not, always inspire sympathy.

In this effort, in one way or another, sometimes more and sometimes less, differences are dissolved. Hence, equality is explicitly or implicitly produced of those who are visualized as contenders; when the blood is spilled from far away, it is not quite thrilling. Here the reasons are more important and it is not understood its psychological impact in those who combat who, in addition, seem to abuse from their clear superiority; they are not forgiven. The victimize speech of the terrorist becomes more visible. A good picture of repression can mean the decisive victory; and it is always possible to obtain it.

CONCLUSIONS

As Clausewitz stated, war (and terrorism is war fiction) is a chameleon, differing from a situation to another, as it adapts to all of them. It is, hence, essential to know how to glimpse its characteristics to be able to confront it accurately. The ethic, the narrative, is the axe the contenders gravitate towards.

Democracies play an insuperable force, the concerted will of millions of citizens –a circumstance that most of the times is forgotten when facing terrorism. However, they have

the servitude of making a residual use of power. It is important to dispose of a strong State, but it is even more important to count with a mature and united society; after all, the State – with all its resources– is at their disposal. Against it, terrorism has little options. Sparta did not have walls, as Thucydides reminds us, because it had its citizens.

The use of the Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism transfers, at first, an immediate feeling of security. It shows determination. It seems that one is willing to solve the problem, which can affect the terrorists' will and, hence, their operative situation falls down. The point is that it has a cost in political terms and it does not meet the central core of the problem, which is the narrative, the disengagement of the social group that backs them, contributing to the victimized speech of terrorism and turning its action into a focus of international attention. The use of the Armed Forces, the pure repression, does not solve the political problems terrorism raise. The problem with terrorism does not normally lie in the terrorists' force.

The Armed Forces are not policemen; they lack the technical skills, the preparation and the professional attitude that are necessary for this demanding task. Moreover, due to their culture, they find difficulties for fully understanding phenomena like terrorism. And this makes their contribution to solve the problem very complicated.

All of this generates ethic problems in a conflict that lasts without being resolved, affecting one's moral and encouraging the victimized strategy of terrorism. Furthermore, a schizoid spiral can even take place fully involving National Security.

In any case, the citizen is a victim that suffers from this extension of the conflict's limits, be it because of the doubts this intervention generates or because of the limitations of the victim's rights and the political carelessness of the non-operative aspects and even of the own social life.

Furthermore, terrorist will unfailingly present this intervention for trying to provide oneself with the status of soldiers and win the legitimacy their cause does not have. The political situation, as already noted, is worsening.

The untimely answers have the risk of dangerously equaling the parties. It is essential to preserve the sense of community. The ethic strengthens the group, gives reasons and increases the will. It should be remind what Hannah Arendt pointed out

“Since the end of human action, as distinct from the end products of fabrication, can never be reliably predicted, the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals.”¹⁷

In conflicts, violence is interactive and the contenders, through inertia, try to overcome one another without limits in terms of the theoretical violence they will use; as a result, after some time, they end up looking alike in countless details and the initial differences that separated them when they began to fight finally disappear.

The State Security Forces and Corps are normally enough in number and in capacity (they do not need heavy armament); these policemen, when they are militarized, such as the Civil Guards, do not distinguish between the interior and exterior, domesticating the frontier and diminishing the political profile of the conflict by placing it at the same level of a mere repression of common criminals.

A different thing from what it has already been mentioned is the use of the Armed Forces in support tasks within the State Security Forces and Corps, of the authentic specialists, performing tasks of protection of the critical infrastructures, surveillance..., or even a punctual intervention, but always remaining on a secondary level, that means, supporting, but not leading. Security significantly improves and there is not a political canon.

In any case, the political and police action must be simultaneous, even if the former shall prevail. Usually, the sphinx's secret is that the sphinx does not have a secret and if it has one, its enigma, it is just a known vulgarity, an incoherent trick, indefensible in a democracy and without a real social support. The best thing is to ignore it, abandon it to its verbiage and impotence, leave it with its grim and beetle-brow face behind which, beyond that pose, that image, there is absolutely nothing.

If terrorists can *“lose to win”*, those who are not can do it as well; it is essential to know how to lose and to refrain, that is the key against their crime and irrelevance. Discipline, never well-defined neither understood.

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¹⁷ Arendt, H. (1972). On violence. In *Crises of The Republic*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Page 106.