

ON INSURGENCY AND TERRORISM

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This paper's focus is on the relationship between political terrorism and armed insurgencies in the early years of the 21st century. I write it with the fighting in Iraq in mind, but with the idea that the struggle for dominance in that country may be illustrative of other internal wars the United States and its allies may have to confront in the near future. Let us begin by attempting to clarify two key terms: guerrilla warfare and terrorism.

Guerrilla warfare and terrorism are both normally regarded as sub-types of a wider category usually labeled unconventional or asymmetrical warfare, i.e. armed conflicts waged by lightly armed irregulars against a more powerful enemy, the armed forces of the state or those of a foreign occupier: the 'war of the flea' in other words. Beyond this commonality many analysts insist on a fundamental distinction. Guerrillas are normally organized as an irregular army engaged in fighting the security forces of the state (or foreign occupier). Guerrillas often have large numbers of adherents and frequently stage attacks against thinly defended outposts of government authority. The goal of guerrillas is the liberation or conquest of territory and the establishment of a counter-government to the one nominally in control in the country's capital. Terrorists, on the other hand, attack civilians or non-combatants (e.g. women and children) for the purpose of sending a message to and modifying the behavior of a wider audience. Guerrillas seek territory as means of defeating an enemy. Terrorists seek to create a psychological shock. Guerrillas normally operate in the countryside while terrorists stage their operations in the city in order never to be far from television cameras.ⁱ

What is the relationship between terrorism and guerrilla warfare? The literature usually provides us with three responses. First, there is a response drawn from the Marxist-Leninist tradition. According to this understanding, terrorism represents the earliest agitation/propaganda phase of a protracted revolutionary struggle. Revolutionaries carry out such exemplary actions as the assassination or kidnapping of public officials, religious figures, prominent bankers, businessmen and representatives of foreign governments as a means of catching the attention of an audience they wish to impress. Once a certain level of publicity is achieved, the revolutionaries are then able to move on to more serious operations by launching a guerrilla campaign against selected police and military targets. As this campaign progresses, the revolutionaries are able to create 'liberated zones', within which the nominal authorities no longer function, and begin to perform a variety of government tasks themselves.ⁱⁱ

A second way of looking at the relationship between terrorism and guerrilla warfare is to regard these tactics as independent of one another. They may be viewed not as complementary tactics but as alternative means for achieving the same or similar objectives: revolution, national liberation, separatism. The recently concluded efforts by Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain and the Provisional Irish Republican Army in Great Britain to achieve separatist objectives involved terrorism but not guerrilla warfare. The same may be said about the operations of various Palestinian groups linked to the PLO during the 1970s and after. On the other hand, Mao Tse-tung's revolution in China was accomplished largely through the use of guerrilla tactics as outlined above. The same may be said about any number of revolutionary and national liberation struggles in the Third World in the decades following the end of World War II. Latin America, particularly after Castro's 1959 success in Cuba, abounded with revolutionary guerrilla struggles most of which did not succeed. (The Sandinistas in Nicaragua were a notable though short-lived

exception.) In sub-Saharan Africa guerrillas staged insurrections against the European colonialists, e.g., the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, as well as against the successor regimes after the latter's departure.ⁱⁱⁱ

Still a third way of looking at the relationship between guerrilla warfare and terrorism is in terms of cause and effect. In Guatemala, El Salvador and other Latin American countries during the 1970s and 1980s, revolutionary guerrilla activities provided the cause whose effect were terrorist campaigns launched by 'death squads' against individuals and sometimes whole villages thought to sympathize with the guerrillas' objectives. Thus in 1979 the archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, was shot down in his own church by right-wing followers of Roberto D'Aubuisson, a discharged military officer. Archbishop Romero had made the mistake of expressing sympathy for goal of land reform.^{iv} In Latin America more generally 'death squads' or anti-communist 'hunting clubs' have typically been composed of off-duty police or military officers dressed in civilian clothes or civilians hired by wealthy land owners to protect their interests against the depredations of guerrilla bands and terrorist organ groups. In either case, the goal has been to send a message to all those who might sympathize with the cause of revolutionary change.

These distinctions between terrorism, guerrilla warfare and 'death squad' repression are conceptually neat, but unfortunately they do not take into account unconventional conflicts where the three tactics often occur simultaneously. Recent history offers any number of instances where such is the case. The Cuban revolution of 1959, for instance, is widely regarded as involving rural guerrilla warfare almost exclusively. Castro, after all, observed that 'cities were the grave yards of revolution.' But this was not entirely the truth in his movement's revolutionary struggle to oust Fulgencio Batista, the Cuban dictator. Havana was the site of an extensive campaign of terrorist bombings in the years before Castro led his 'bearded ones' down from the Sierra Maestra

Mountains and into the Cuban capital. More recent examples may be found elsewhere in Latin America. The Shining Path movement in Peru and the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) in Colombia are normally identified as terrorist organizations by the US State Department, the Rand Corporation and other organizations developing data bases for the purpose of analyzing terrorist activities on a world-wide basis. Yet both Shining Path and FARC, whatever actions they conduct in Lima and Bogota, also engage in guerrilla warfare in their countries' hinterlands. Nor is the phenomenon confined to Latin America. In the Middle East, Hezbollah is widely identified as a terrorist organization because of the wave of kidnappings and suicide bombings its 'martyrs' carried out against Western and Israeli targets during the 1980s. But if we were to ask what led Ehud Barak's government to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon in 2000, the answer would inevitably refer to the hit-and-run tactics and improvised explosive devices employed by Hezbollah fighters against Israeli military patrols and its allied Southern Lebanese Army in the years leading up to the withdrawal. Hezbollah's operations clearly belong more in the realm of guerrilla warfare than terrorism, at least during this phase of its operations.

This brings us to Southeast Asia and the case or rather cases of Vietnam. The insurrection by the Viet Minh against French rule (1946-1953) and the protracted struggle of the Viet Cong (and their North Vietnamese allies) to expel the Americans and eliminate an independent South Vietnamese government (1961-1975) are widely regarded as classic cases of successful guerrilla warfare.^v Both of the conflicts began with an agitation/propaganda phase involving, inter alia the assassination of local officials. Most of the fighting then occurred in the rainforests, rice paddies and remote highlands far from Vietnam's major population centers. In both instances, the incumbents, the French colonial administration and the Saigon government, were defeated when the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong (really the North Vietnamese Army – NVA) were able to deploy conventional military formations and conquer their enemies

in set-piece battles. To the extent terrorism played a role it was at the initial part of the struggles. Stanley Karnow, for instance, provides us with this description of Saigon in 1946:

“ ... At dawn Binh Xuyen terrorists led by Viet Minh agents slipped past ... soldiers supposedly guarding the district. Smashing doors and windows, they broke into bedrooms and massacred one hundred fifty French and Eurasian civilians, sparing neither women nor children. They dragged a hundred or more away as hostages, mutilating many more before freeing them later.”^{vi}

After the departure of the French and the establishment of an independent government of South Vietnam, one American specialist on Southeast Asia made this observation: “Bernard Fall relates that he returned to Vietnam in 1957 after the war had been over for two years and was told by everyone the situation was fine. He was bothered however, by the many obituaries in the press of village chiefs who had been killed by ‘unknown elements’ and ‘bandits’. Upon investigation he found these attacks were clustered in certain areas and that there was a purpose behind them.”^{vii}

These initial attacks were by no means the end of terrorist violence as both the Viet Minh and Viet Cong proceeded to move on to more advanced stages of their insurgencies. In both instances terrorist attacks were an inextricable part of their operations from beginning to end. The Viet Minh staged terrorist attacks for almost the entire duration of the conflict. In Hanoi, Saigon and other Vietnamese cities they planted bombs in or hurled them at bars, restaurants, cafes, theaters, hotels and brothels known to be frequented by French civilians or off-duty French military personnel. In the villages, French colonial administrators, school teachers and local notables though to support the French presence were targeted for killing by Viet Minh cadres, usually at

night in order to heighten the level of fear and apprehension. Nor were the Viet Minh the only perpetrators. Various indigenous religious organizations and criminal gangs with separate political agendas and vendettas to pursue also staged terrorist operations in the major cities. Graham Greene's novel The Quiet American captures the atmosphere of foreboding in Saigon in the early 1950s. Thousands were killed in this fashion before France's departure in 1954.^{viii}

Viet Cong terrorism was even more substantial. No systematically gathered data are available for the early phases of the conflict, 1960-1965. Nevertheless, the American Mission in Saigon estimated that there were some 9,700 assassinations in this period. The figure, apparently on the low side, included the killing of many South Vietnamese civilians, e.g. school girls, Catholic priests, country club employees, without any obvious links to the government in Saigon. The arrival of Americans in significant numbers made them attractive targets for terrorist attack. For instance, in February 1964 three Americans were killed and 32 others were injured, most of them American dependents, when terrorists bombed the Kinh Do movie theater in Saigon.^{ix}

From 1966 onward the Public Safety Division of the US Mission in Saigon did compile systematic data on Viet Cong terrorism. I report the results in Table 1.

Table 1
 US Mission reports of Viet Cong Assassinations
 And Abductions, 1966-1969

<u>Assassinations</u>	<u>Abductions</u>	
Government Officials	1,153	664

Government Employees	1,863	381
General Populace	18,031	24,962
Total = 43, 938		

Source: Steven Hosmer, Viet Cong Repression and Its Implications for the Future (Lexington MA: Heath Lexington Books, 1970) p. 44

Academics might argue over whether or not the attacks on government officials and employees were really terrorism or guerrilla warfare. But the vast majority of the killings and kidnappings carried out by the Viet Cong during these years were in fact committed against civilians. The magnitude of the Viet Cong (VC) terrorist campaign was obscured by the large-scale fighting between American and South Vietnamese forces against their VC and North Vietnamese enemies. But if we compare the number of Vietnamese civilians killed and kidnapped by the VC it makes the total number of casualties inflicted by the various West European groups -- ETA, the Provisional IRA, Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades etc. during their various campaigns pale by comparison. Furthermore, VC terrorism may very well have played a role in convincing the American public that the Vietnam War was un-winnable. The invasion of the American Embassy compound in the middle of Saigon by VC cadres during the January 1968 Tet Offensive (the goal was the assassination of US Ambassador Elsworth Bunker) was reported on television throughout the United States. Millions of Americans were able to see just how precarious the situation was. The VC had achieved 'propaganda by deed'.

The departure of the Americans from Vietnam and the subsequent collapse of the South Vietnamese government in 1975 leads us to raise important questions: does terrorism work? And, if it does, under what

circumstances does it work? Efforts to answer these questions have set-off lively debates among terrorism's increasingly numerous analysts.

Max Abrahams summarizes the views of those who stress terrorism's effectiveness.

“Writers are increasingly contending that terrorism is an effective coercive strategy. In his 2002 best-seller, Why Terrorism Works, Alan Dershowitz argues that Palestinian gains since the early 1970s reveal that terrorism ‘works’ and is thus ‘an entirely rational choice to achieve a political objective.’ David Lake recently adapted James Fearon’s rationalist bargaining model to argue that terrorism is a ‘rational and strategic’ tactic because it enables terrorists to achieve a superior bargain by increasing their capabilities relative to those of their target countries.... According to Scott Atran, terrorist groups ‘generally’ achieve their policy objectives. As evidence, he notes that the Lebanese-based Shiite terrorist group, Hezbollah, compelled the United States and France to withdraw from Lebanon in 1984 and that in 1990 the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka wrested control of Tamil areas from the Sinhalese-dominated government.”^x

Robert Pape adopts a more qualified position. In his widely discussed analysis of suicide terrorism, Pape concludes that suicide terrorist campaigns work when the vital interests of the target countries are not at stake. The Americans and French withdrew from Lebanon because their presence in that country involved no vital interest. The Israelis, on the other hand, did not depart the West Bank despite the massive wave of suicide bombings perpetrated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian groups during the al-Aqsa Intifada because the government regarded its continued occupation as a vital interest.^{xi}

Abrahams answers the fundamental question concerning terrorism's 'strategic effectiveness' by examining the careers of all 28 foreign terrorist organizations identified by the US State Department since 2001.^{xii} Did they achieve their strategic goals, as they were defined by the terrorist groups themselves? Abrahams observes that in the vast majority of cases the terrorist groups failed to get what they said they wanted. Four groups, he observes, managed to achieve a limited success: Hamas and Islamic Jihad helped to coerce the Israelis into leaving the Gaza Strip; al-Qaeda, Abrahams judges, have contributed to a reduced American presence in the Persian Gulf; and FARC has taken control of some territory in Colombia. Abrahams' calculates that the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka have achieved a partial success by establishing an autonomous zone in the northern part of the country.

In the 23 other cases the terrorist groups enjoyed no success at all. This overall failure of terrorists to get what they wanted leads Abrahams to the conclusion that terrorism is an ineffective tactic. Why? Abrahams answer this way: "Countries believe that their civilian populations are attacked not because the terrorist group is protesting unfavorable external conditions such as territorial occupation or poverty. Rather, target countries infer from the short-term consequences of terrorism -- the death of innocent civilians, mass fear, the loss of confidence in the government to offer protection ... --the objectives of the terrorist group." ^{xiii} Because of terrorist attacks on civilians, governments perceive or misperceive that the terrorist groups' goals are what Israelis often call 'existential'. The aims of the terrorist group are not confined to redressing specific grievances, but encompass the destruction of the state itself or the prevailing social and political order.

If this is the perception, then it follows that governments will employ whatever the resources at their disposal needed to bring about the terrorists' defeat because attempts at bargaining and compromise will prove unavailing.

Since in most cases the resources available to states far exceed those to which the terrorists have access, states win, at least in most cases. How then may we explain those cases in which states do not win?

Abrahams himself provides us with a partial answer. In two of the four cases he cites of limited or partial terrorist success, the groups involved FARC and the Tamil Tigers, are relatively large and employ a combination of guerrilla warfare and terrorism in their fight against the governments in Bogota and Colombo. FARC and the Tamil Tigers are armed insurgents not just terrorist bands. In the case of Islamic Jihad and Hamas coercing the Israelis into withdrawing from the Gaza Strip, we should note that their terrorist operations were part of a more general popular uprising against the Israeli presence, one that captured the attention of millions of people throughout the Muslim world.

Terrorism as a tactic by itself may not be effective in achieving a group's strategic aims, as opposed to some short-term goal (coercing the Americans and French into leaving Beirut in 1983). But terrorist campaigns waged in conjunction with other tactics may prove to be highly effective means for the organizations involved to get what they want. The Viet Minh and Viet Cong are cases in point.

The situation in Iraq is certainly more complicated than the conflicts over the fate of Vietnam three or four decades ago. The struggle among competing Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish organizations does not bear much resemblance to the fighting in Southeast Asia. Religious differences, Buddhist versus Catholics, did play a role in Vietnam but nothing on the order of its role in the current fighting in Iraq. Nor was there anything approaching the Baathist party's domination of the Baghdad government in South Vietnam. There were no Vietnamese equivalents of Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda in Iraq either.

Still, there do appear to be some similarities. In both the Iraqi and Vietnamese cases Western powers, American and French, sought to build and maintain governments that were sympathetic to their interests. In both cases American (and French) military forces were employed over some years to sustain these governments in power. In Vietnam and now Iraq the administrations in Washington, first under Nixon and now Bush, sought to disengage from the struggle by promoting local military forces to carry on the fight as American ones slowly withdrew. And in both cases, domestic insurgencies received the support of outside powers. The North Vietnamese and the Soviet Union provided vital assistance to the Viet Cong (in fact the former took over the bulk of the fighting after the 1968 Tet Offensive). In Iraq, by most accounts Shiite groups are receiving assistance from the Iranians. And the more shadowy Sunni organizations have been helped by 'holy warriors' making their way into Iraq from Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Al-Qaeda, an international organization after all, has made the defeat and humiliation of the Americans in Iraq among its highest priorities.^{xiv}

What place for terrorism and guerilla warfare in the fighting for Iraq? On July 16, 2003, a few months after the capture of Baghdad by American forces, their commander General John Abizaid took account of the renewed fighting by declaring that the enemy was engaged in a "classic guerrilla type" campaign against the American military's occupation of Iraq.^{xv} Perhaps it was when General Abisaid spoke, but subsequent developments suggest that the fighting over Iraq has come to involve not only "classic guerrilla" activities but terrorism and Latin-American style 'death squad' repression as well. Further, these tactics are presently being used simultaneously by the various competitors for power.

If we distinguish terrorism from guerilla tactics based on targets, non-combatants for the former, armed opponents in the case of guerrillas, Iraq presents us with a mixed picture. Table 2 records the frequency of suicide

attacks by target between 2003 and the first six months of 2006. The frequencies suggest that suicide attacks, normally thought to be the quintessential means of terrorist violence, were distributed among combatant

Table 2
Distribution of Suicide Attacks in Iraq by Targets, 2003-2006

Tourists and others	7
Diplomatic and governmental	53
Military	56
Police	183
Civilians	132

Source: Terrorism Data Base, National Security Studies Center, University of Haifa

and non-combatant targets. If we regard the military and police as combatants then they, taken together, were the most common targets of 'martyrdom operations'.

If guerrilla warfare tactics involve not simply attacks by irregular forces on police and military targets, but the conquest of territory as well, General Abizaid's observation appears to hold true or partially true. Sections of Anbar Province in Western Iraq have fallen under the control of Sunni groups on an intermittent basis. The towns of Falluja and Ramadi have proven to be exceptionally difficult for American forces to maintain control.^{xvi} Certainly al-Qaeda in Iraq hopes to transform parts of the country into zones of control, apparently in order to establish training camps comparable to al-Qaeda operations in Afghanistan before the defeat of the Taliban in the fall of 2001.

To restate what is obvious to virtually all, the struggle over the fate of Iraq has involved an enormous volume of terrorist violence. Table 3 shows the distribution of fatal terrorist attacks (i.e. the killing of non-combatants as defined by the National Counter Terrorism Center) on a worldwide basis for 2005.

Table 3
The Leading Fifteen Countries by Fatalities in 2005

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of fatalities</u>
Iraq	8, 299
India	1,357
Colombia	810
Afghanistan	682
Thailand	500
Nepal	462
Pakistan	388
Russia	237
Sudan	157
Congo	149
Philippines	144
Sri Lanka	130
Algeria	114
Chad	109
Uganda	109
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Total =	13, 597

Source: NCTC Report on Incidence of Terrorism 2005, p. xix

The figures indicate that Iraq experienced more terrorism-related fatalities than the other terrorism-wracked countries combined. US citizens (non-combatants) accounted for 47 (less than half of one per cent) of terrorism-caused deaths in Iraq in 2005. Most of the victims were and are Iraqi. But expressed somewhat differently, the 47 fatalities in Iraq represent 83 per cent of the total number of 56 Americans killed as the result of terrorist attacks world-wide in that year. If we subtracted the Iraqi fatalities, the direct threat of terrorism for Americans would seem far less menacing than is the case, at least in 2005.

During the 1960s and 1970s various Latin America countries abounded with right-wing 'death squads'. For instance, Argentina had its Triple A (Argentina Anti-Communist Alliance); Brazil its CCC (Communist Hunting Command); and Uruguay its Tupamaro Hunting Club. And despite its relatively small size Guatemala had at least three 'death squads': the Anticommunist Army, Purple Rose and White Hand which, taken together, were allegedly responsible for the deaths of thousands of individuals suspected of left-wing involvements or even sympathies.

In the ex-Yugoslavia Serbian death squads carried out mass killings of Muslims in Bosnia, often acting as ancillaries of the Bosnian-Serb army during the early 1990s. "Arkan", a gang leader and international criminal, and his band of "Tigers" received the most publicity, but they were hardly alone. The "White Eagles" and various other Serbian paramilitary groups also participated in the killing of defenseless Muslim women and children.^{xvii}

Death squad activity is now playing an increasingly significant role in the fighting for Iraq. The Shiite organizations, the Mahdi Army (along with its various splinter groups) and the Badr Brigades, originally organized to expel the Americans, are now engaged in “ethnic-cleansing” operations in Baghdad and other cities.^{xviii} Sunnis who happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time are dragged off the streets, tortured and then executed in a variety of exceptionally gruesome ways. Because of their links to the new Shiite dominated government (and evidently the Iranian one as well) both the Mahdi Army and Badr Brigades bear a resemblance to the Latin American ‘death squads’ of the 1970s. (The use of “off-duty” police and military officers to do the kidnappings and killings strikes a familiar chord.) On the other hand, the latter tended to murder people suspected of believing and behaving in certain ways. The Shiite ‘death squads’ in Iraq come closer to their Balkan predecessors because of the more indiscriminate nature of their killings and the sadistic pleasures that seem to accompany them.

Internal wars or insurgencies from Afghanistan and Nepal to Somalia and the Sudan along with various other countries in Central, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa appear to be taking on similar characteristics. As in Vietnam and Iraq, conflicts so different in other ways, they now seem to involve guerrilla warfare (rural and urban), terrorism and ‘death squad’ repression in varying combinations. Furthermore, methods of struggle that prove effective in some locales are being adapted for use elsewhere. The present fighting for Afghanistan between Taliban and the domestic and international defenders of the Karzai government now involves suicide bombings and other terrorist activity (based upon the Iraqi experience) in Kabul and other Afghan cities tactics now used in conjunction to what was initially a guerrilla war campaign. American and NATO armed reactions to these methods seem to have the following effect:

“A rise in civilian casualties from Western military operations and insurgent tactics coupled with the anemic pace of development has caused deep resentment of the West and the Karzai government.... This new hostility makes it more difficult for anyone associated with the government or the international community to operate, as insurgents are increasingly targeting Afghan nationals who work for international NGO, NATO and US operations within the country.”^{xix} The writer goes on to write that Afghanistan is “like Iraq on a Slow Burn.” If this observation is true, for the first time in its history the United States may be in the process of losing two wars simultaneously!

If we are willing to assume that internal wars in Third World countries now and in the foreseeable future will display the combination of tactics just described, what role can or should the United States play in these conflicts? There is a literature which seeks to explain why ‘strong’ countries (measured in terms of population size, industrial capacity, size of military) often lose to ‘weak’ ones that seems helpful.^{xx}

One consideration is that of motivation. The ‘weak’ may very well defeat the ‘strong’ because they are more strongly committed to the outcome of the struggle. If the weak side regards the outcome as a matter of life or death while its strong enemy only has a limited interest in the result, the latter may choose to ‘cut and run’ when the cost of further involvement begins to exceed any possible benefit to be achieved.

‘Strong’ democracies may suffer from additional problems. Because of their sensitivity to voter preferences, strong democracies may be somewhat less willing to suffer serious casualties than their authoritarian counterparts. True or not, the decisions of the Reagan and Clinton administrations to withdraw from Beirut and Mogadishu following the deaths of American

servicemen, led Osama bin-Laden to conclude the United States was a paper-tiger. (An American withdrawal from Iraq might confirm the terrorist chieftain's judgment.)

Not only are democracies sensitive to the views of voters at different points in the electoral cycle, they must also deal with the problem of the moral sensibilities of elites. The American, British and other 'strong' western democracies have significant numbers of highly educated religious and secular elites, in the churches, schools, academia and the mass media, that coalesce into anti-war protest movements when reports mount of their armed forces inflicting casualties on civilians or non-combatants in the course of their operations against the 'weak' enemy. In a kind of jujitsu politics (the weak use the power of the strong to their own benefit), anti-war or peace movements may be used by the 'weak' side to successfully depict itself as the victim of aggression by the strong, particularly when these messages are accompanied by accounts of strong-side indifference to the suffering of civilians.^{xxi} If decision-makers within the 'strong' country wish to persist in the struggle, they must be prepared to wage a propaganda war on the home front against the anti-war movement's spokespersons for the moral high ground.

More generally, there is the morality of the 'weak' to consider. Different cultures regard warfare in different ways. Western military establishments wage war with 'soldiers', individuals trained in particular modes of conduct and supposed to act in accordance with certain professional standards. Oftentimes, these Western soldiers, e.g. from NATO countries, confront 'warriors' from traditional clans, tribes and local communities which operate on the basis of other codes of conduct. For instance, "... Traditional societies do not have standing professional armies in the Western sense. Rather all men of age in a tribe, clan, or communal group learn through societal norms and legacies to fight in specific ways...."^{xxii} Often members of traditional societies regard

warfare as part of their way of life, a normal part of the collective life cycle rather than a specialized function carried out under unusual conditions by specially trained professionals. In Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya tribe or clan-based fighting is almost always irregular, protracted in time and involving unconventional forms of combat.

In fact, according to Arreguin-Toft, it is largely when the ‘warriors’ of traditional tribe and clan-based societies seek to defeat Western armies by beating them at their own game that they are likely to lose. When the ‘warriors’ of traditional societies employ conventional military means of attack and defense against Western forces which employ these same tactics, they are very likely to be defeated. On the other hand, the chances of ‘warrior’ success improve dramatically when they confront the conventional approach of the Western military forces with a combination of tactics: guerrilla warfare and what Arreguin-Toft refers to as ‘barbarism’ (i.e. “the deliberate or systematic harm of noncombatants in pursuit of a military or political objective). If Western military establishments seek to prevail in these settings they will be tempted to themselves engage in the tactic of ‘barbarism’ as a means of weakening their enemies will to resist. The temptation is likely to be exceptionally strong when the distinction between the ‘warriors’ and the enemy’s civilian population is far from clear-cut.

When American and other Western militaries adopt ‘barbarism’ as a tactic, either intentionally or by accident in the heat of battle, the results are likely to be self-defeating. As in Iraq, these results include the manufacture of more terrorists than were present at the beginning of the fighting.^{xxiii} (The Israeli experience in southern Lebanon might be offered as another case in point.) They also include the alienation of the local population, whose support is likely to be vital in defeating the enemy, and the stimulation of popular opposition to

the fighting on the home front when accounts of 'barbarism' are reported by the now globalized mass media.

Some conclusions: Terrorism as a tactic may not be effective when employed by itself. The long list of now defunct terrorist groups in Western Europe and Latin America, both ideological and nationalist, may be introduced in evidence. On the other hand, terrorism when used in conjunction with guerrilla warfare and other means of challenging domestic authorities and foreign occupiers appears to be much more successful. The contrast is illustrated by the Abraham report of terrorist group failures (see above) and Arreguin-Toft's data which show increasing success of the 'weak' side defeating the 'strong' one in armed conflicts in recent decades.

The disadvantages of the 'strong', noted above, coupled with the combination of unconventional tactics used increasingly by the 'weak' place formidable barriers in the way of American, Western or Western-style forces when they come into conflicts rooted in the formidable problems confronting Third World countries in the coming decades. Direct participation in these conflicts may be appropriate only when the United States and other Western powers have some vital interest at stake. Where the interest is serious but less than vital, the cultivation of proxies of one kind or another may make better sense.

Zaragoza, 30 de noviembre de 2006

NOTES

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- ⁱ See, for example, Louise Richardson, What Terrorists Want (New York: Random House, 2006) pp. 6-7
- ⁱⁱ See, for example, Brian Crozier, The Rebels (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1960) and Harry Eckstein (ed.), Internal War (New York: The Free Press, 1964)
- ⁱⁱⁱ For a discussion see, Walter Laqueur, Guerrilla (Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1976) pp. 239-282
- ^{iv} See, for example, Tina Rosenberg, Children of Cain (New York: William Morrow, 1991) pp. 224-270
- ^v For a history see, Sidney Karnow, Vietnam: A History (New York: Viking Press, 1983) esp. pp. 149-151, 279-281
- ^{vi} Karnow, p. 149
- ^{vii} Quoted in Laqueur, p.271
- ^{viii} See, Lycos, Viet Minh Strategy and Tactics, 1945-54 available at: <http://members.lycos.co.uk/Indochine/vm/tiger.html>
- ^{ix} For a discussions see, Leonard Weinberg, "Suicide Terrorism for Secular Causes" in Ami Pedahzur (ed.), The Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 114-117
- ^x Max Abrahams, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work" International Security 31:2 (Fall 2006) pp. 44-45
- ^{xi} Robert Pape, Dying to Win (New York: Random House, 2005) pp. 75-76
- ^{xii} Abrahams, pp. 42-78
- ^{xiii} Abrahams, p. 59
- ^{xiv} See, for example, Abu Bakr Naji, "The Management of Savagery". A translation of this book can be found at : <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/naji.asp>
- ^{xv} Quoted in John Tierney, Chasing Ghosts (Dulles, VI: Potomac Books, 2006) p. 1
- ^{xvi} For a discussion see, George Packer, The Assassins' Gate (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2005) pp. 222-224
- ^{xvii} Misha Glenny, The Fall of Yugoslavia (New York: Penguin Books, 1996) pp. 37-40
- ^{xviii} For a discussion see, Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew, Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias (New York: Colombia University Press, 2006) pp. 239-240
- ^{xix} Beth Ellen Cole and Kiya Bajpai, "Afghanistan Five Years Later" (United States Institute of Peace) p. 2
- ^{xx} For a summary, see Ivan Arreguin-Toft, How the Weak Win Wars (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp, 23-47

^{xxi} For a discussion see, Gil Merom, How Democracies Lose Small Wars (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) ad passim

^{xxii} Shultz and Dew, p. 262

^{xxiii} See, for example, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, The Next Attack (New York: Henry Holt, 2005) pp. 175-193