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POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS A VALUE PROBLEM FOR SECURITY POLICY

ABSTRACT

The author argues that the moral dimensions of political violence play a crucial role in the conceptualisation of effective ways to combat such violence. It goes on to argue that the ability to empathise with the politically violent is a difficult precondition for the development of effective control strategies, and guilds its interpretation on the philosophical perspectives on the legitimacy of grievances and illegitimacy of methods used to address them by terrorists and the other perpetrators of political violence. The author draws parallels between key controversies in politically violent campaigns and conventional wars, and concludes that, despite the alarming inpalatability of political violence, the experiential record so far suggests that a de-escalation of mutual perceptions between the politically violent and the mainstream society appears to be a necessary precondition for the resolution of the underlying conflicts.

MORAL JUSTIFICATIONS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE?

If violence is a method of last resort in resolving conflicts, then the moral side of it is not unequivocal. This proposition entails that violence is not always unjustified, and this applies not only to legal violence, such as the

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repressive measures taken by the legitimate authorities in a society, but also to violence that challenges an unjust or unbearable legal order that is in obvious contradiction with some or all of the basic intuitions about fairness in society.[2]

Contemporary political discourse has it that any illegal violence is to be condemned, and that any manner of violently challenging the authority or policies of the legitimate state falls within the realm of crime or terrorism. This is an obviously untrue proposition, unless we assume that the state is equipped with divine attributes and that any form of challenging the existing legal order is blasphemy. Democratic political systems require an extensive grassroots participation in the mechanisms of decision making, yet democratic regimes often exercise quite undemocratic and intolerant policies far from their home frontiers, in distant occupation, peace-building or peace-maintaining missions under the auspices of the UN and other international and supranational organisations of today. The same applies to non-democratic regimes, which sometimes create unbearable conditions for the exercise of basic human freedoms and rights. In such situations, and even more so in situations where legitimate group interests cannot be properly articulated in the official institutions, various forms of insurgency, including not just popular revolts, but also terrorist campaigns, ensue. These campaigns, while certainly morally repulsive from the point of view of their methods of targeting the vulnerable, and their immediate consequences, are not *by definition* morally indefensible. They are subject to a legitimate moral discourse.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Political sociologists are perhaps better equipped than political scientists to operate with the concept of morally controversial political violence, including terrorism, because it was they who first pointed out the

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2   In the course of the paper, I use the terms "political violence" and "terrorism" without distinguishing them precisely, although political violence is a broader concept than terrorism. The lack of a definition and distinction is on purpose, because it illustrates the generalised value-problem that applies to the public discourse about both political violence in general, and terrorism in particular. This problem is a matter of perceptions, as I will show, and such perceptions actually prevent the politically violent, including the terrorists, on the one hand, and those charged with fighting political violence, on the other hand, from reconceptualising each other in ways that would allow them to achieve the first necessary step for a peaceful resolution of disputes: a de-escalation of value-judgements. E.g. John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and prevention*, Macmillan, London, 1990.

existence of the so-called *structural violence* as the basis for the violent reclamation of group rights through revolutions or other insurgent movements, including some terrorist activities. Structural violence is defined as that violence which arises from a structure of oppression of legitimate needs or interests in a society. Thus a system of institutions can be structurally violent if it is fundamentally unjust, and even a democratic political system is capable of exerting structural violence on certain legitimate groups, either by systematically excluding their interests from being heard at the decision making table, or by conditioning policy outcomes that systematically militate against a legitimate group interest, including a minority interest. It was a primitive form of structural violence that Alexis de Tequeville infamously termed "tyranny of the majority", where the will of the majority "democratically" shaped the institutions, and the work of the institutions systematically discriminated against minorities.

Discrimination against minorities has gained particular prominence in political theory where ethnic minorities are concerned, because of the civil wars that such structural violence often causes, but it should not be forgotten that there are other legitimate minorities as well, including societal or cultural minorities, even those with a reduced set of civil rights, such as prisoners. The homeless people are also a structurally oppressed group, because social institutions are by and large simply not geared to cater for their needs in the same way as to the needs of others. Arguably there are numerous such legitimate minorities, and the reason they are never mentioned as victims of structural violence is simply because they are not capable of striking back and *thus* marking the limit of tolerable structural violence in a society. All theories of political revolution are in fact theories about confronting structural violence. Once the existence of structural violence is recognised, it becomes clear that, depending on the circumstances of a particular group, political violence may in fact be the only available method for a group to respond to intolerable structural violence, be it the violence of one society, or that of an entire system of states. Today we are facing a relatively broad perception of structural violence against an entire culture, namely that of the Islamic regimes, and thus what is called "Islamic terrorism", be it a correct term or not, marks the perceived limit of tolerable structural violence of what we like to call "the international community" against the Islamic world.[3]

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3   Note that I refer to perceptions here, rather than assuming that any perception necessarily conforms entirely with the reality. The important thing is that many in the

To make the above proposition clearer, for political violence to be a legitimate subject of moral discourse it must be subject to a debate of whether or not it is morally acceptable or justifiable. In this perspective, if an act of political terrorism is judged as morally unacceptable in its particular form, there is a theoretical possibility, equal in fact, that it could also be judged as morally acceptable. In other words, the fact that an act instantiates political violence does not by itself automatically make it morally unacceptable, if one assumes the rationale of political violence stated in the first paragraph. In the same way as violence is generally not *prima facie* morally unacceptable, although many, if not most, instances of it may well be, political terrorism is not morally unacceptable *sui generis*, assuming that what was stated in the first paragraph holds.

Political violence has an irreducible social dimension, in that, while its explicitly stated goals may be strongly political, driven by ethnic or ideological grievances or ambitions, its immediate perpetrators typically come from the lower social classes and, with the exception of some Islamic militants who may come from wealthy families, the perpetrators tend to identify with the deprived groups that share their problems, even those in different countries. The anti-American terrorism that has characterised much of the global terrorist activity at least since 11 September 2001 has by and large been perpetrated by groups with strong sympathy for all those other populations who have been the victims of American military action, political domination, or economic abuse. As Ted Honderich poignantly pointed out, the social dimension of political violence is based on the fact that the best-off tenth of any country's or civilisation's population has much in common with the best-

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Islamic countries perceive the realities in the policies of the international community as being structurally violent against their civilisation. While I would not think for one moment of justifying Islamic, or any other terrorism, or implying that the international community is necessarily wrong when it tries to curb retrograde and inhumane practices in some of the Islamic regimes, to understand the grassroots legitimacy of political violence in Islamic countries one needs to talk about perceptions, because perceptions condition political behaviour. Thus a political analyst trying to understand political violence may safely remain within the conceptual bounds of the relevant perceptions, unless one wants to delve into substantive value judgements, which, then, goes beyond the scope of political, even conceptual analysis of terrorism. In short, while terrorism is probably morally wrong, it is not, and political violence more generally conceived is not, *obviously* morally wrong. To *prove it* wrong, one would have to argue that a *particular form* of political violence is morally unjustifiable, taking into account all the relevant genesis, circumstances, modalities and extent of the particular violence.

off tenth of any other country's elite, while it has very little in common with the remaining 90% of either its own, or the population of any other country. What identifies the interests of the best-off tenth as common is their ability to profit from the work of the remaining 90%. Thus the representatives of the worst-off tenth in any society will likely be able to identify with the worst-off tenth in many other societies, and this is what most revolutionary movements with international aspirations have always counted on.[4]

Honderich argues that both the best- and the worst-off tenths of societies tend to want the same goods that most in the developed countries of today have, including some degree of control over their own cultural and national identities, their religion, and their country's policies. The more imposition there is, the greater the frustration of these legitimate desires; similarly, the less recourse to legitimate avenues for redressing the grievances, the greater the probability that the group will eventually resort to some type of political violence, including terrorism. Honderich goes on to argue that structural violence arising from the *status quo* for many groups may be to blame for some of them resorting to violent means, and he suggests that structural violence in a moral perspective arises from the unwillingness of the dominant majority in the current world to change things. In short, he argues that our omissions operate down the chain of moral, not just factual, causation that ends in political violence. Failing to realise the need for change with respect to some oppressed groups, suffering from structural violence, and the resultant failure to act to change things, are almost as important in the moral evaluation of things as the resenting group's resorting to terrorism, for example. Once this double causation on both the factual and moral levels is recognised, it becomes clear that political violence is not unjustified *per se*. Philosophically, a trivial conclusion, yet politically a highly incorrect one. Contemporary political correctness requires one to condemn all terrorism in the context of designing or trying to influence policy, yet conceptual considerations force one to recognise that what political correctness dictates here, as in many other cases, is theoretically unsustainable.[5]

David Hume held it that the feeling of sympathy was the foundation of all moral intersubjectivity and consequently all moral action in the everyday sense of the word, and Honderich argues that the moral impulse to

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4   Ted Honderich, *After the Terror* (expanded, revised edition), Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003, pp. 20–4.

5   Ibid., p. 24.

change things that represent structural violence arises from the moral necessity of *sympathy*.[6] Sympathy in fact is not a merely desirable character feature; it is a moral imperative in an intersubjective world, and consequently failure to exercise sympathy results in structural violence. The stronger the claim that sympathy is a positive moral prescription, a moral duty so to say, the more direct the consequence that the violence that arises from a failure to exercise sympathy may be justified. Accordingly, the greater and graver the failure to exercise sympathy, the higher the likelihood that grave forms of political violence might also have to be justified morally. This, in short, is what Honderich's Humean argument implies.

Structural violence is typically exemplified in the double standards of politics, usually where those of us in between the worst-off and the best-off tenths of societies, when victimised political violence, especially terrorism, see themselves in a very different light from the often far more numerous victims of equal of greater violence, arising from either the actions of our countries, or the failure of them to address the consequences of structural violence whose part we are, intentionally or unintentionally. The consequences of the 11th September 2001 for the thousands of innocent people are elaborated extensively in the media, including the health-related consequences of the pollution caused by the destruction of the twin-towers in New York, yet the resulting condemnation of the terror act falls completely astray of equally recognising the human suffering in the Arab countries arising from American-backed Israeli military actions — a suffering that is *far greater* than that caused in New York and Washington in 2001. This default of moral reasoning, which is essentially based on self-identification, falls victim to the limitations of sympathy, or the failure to extent sympathy to those perceived as very different. For a middle-class viewer of the CNN in the United States it is naturally easy to identify with the victims in the twin-towers, but it is a more far-fetched endeavour to extend sympathy through self-identification to the Arab cattle breader in Gaza whose home has been destroyed and family killed by an Israeli helicopter attack. In other words, civilisations are indeed barriers to sympathy and to the drawing of moral equations.[7]

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6   This theme is familiar in moral philosophy from Max Scheler and his famous book *The Nature of Sympathy*, Routledge, London, 1954.

7   Much has been written about the double standards in politics, and in particular about those operating in the area between terrorism against the western civilisation's victims,

CONFLICTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Political violence arises from an underlying conflict that cannot be resolved in the usual ways. A collective aspiration that cannot be articulated in government policy or parliamentary debate, if it is acute and pressing enough for the collective concerned, may find its expression in political violence. Any such expression, as in all other conflicts, will conform to certain rules, as any collective, political or not, generates its own code of conflict behaviour that is rooted in the tradition, psychology and social needs and habits of the group.[8] Models of political violence will thus differ as much as various cultures and group subcultures differ. While Islamic militants will use suicide bombers, European terrorists will focus on the expert use of demolition explosives, while Asian groups may use other types of subversion, such as gas in the underground tunnels. Every form of violence, and thus also of political violence, contains a message of its own, both about the grievance, and about the group behind the attack.

In discussing the dimensions of political violence in a moral perspective, clearly one must keep in mind the rationale of the group that stands behind the particular activity, the gravity of the lack of alternative courses of action available to the group, the significance of the cause the group fights for, and the means the group uses. There is a case for arguing that in fact most of the repugnance caused by political violence comes from the means used, and not so much from the fact that what is at stake is illegal and illegitimate violence. Most people feel that an oppressed group that conducts terrorist strategy to target military and political leaders, while clearly an outlaw, might have a cause worth discussing. At the same time, almost everybody is repulsed by any group that plants bombs in shopping centres, kidnaps children or executes prisoners by beheading them. The methods used in political violence are as crucial as the legitimacy of the moral cause found in structural violence.

Political violence may well be seen by its perpetrators as a particular type of war. On the other hand, fighting political violence, and in particular

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and that against the Arab world. It is not my intention here to draw on the writings of Noam Chomsky and many others on the subject, for many of those are explicitly intended as political pamphlets, despite their undoubtedly valid philosophical points. I am concerned here with the limits of legitimate moral discourse about political violence, and in particular about terrorism as its most problematic form.

8   Geoffrey Best, *War & Law Since 1945*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 14.

fighting terrorism, may also be seen as a war, as can be seen from the George Bush Junior Administration's phrase "war on terror". Once the two perceptions are fixed on the concept of war, some principles that parallel the law of conventional war become relevant for the ensuing consideration. Perhaps the most important is the seemingly obvious truth, so poignantly expressed by Hugo Grotius, that "(a) remedy must be found for those who believe that in war nothing is lawful, and for those for whom all things in war are lawful".[9]

There is little controversy in the above principle, as the entire war of law in fact rests on it. Yet, both political violence and the "war on terror" face serious challenges in respect of perhaps the most immediate conceptual consequence of the Groatian principle: if there are things in war that are unlawful, then surely the first of them would be to attack non-combatants. The distinction between combatants and non-combatants is fundamental to the war of law, because doing things necessary to achieve the military objective, within the bounds of the law and morality of war, requires attacking combatants, at least under certain "lawful" conditions. Accordingly, the restriction on harming non-combatants would imply the ability of the combatants to clearly distinguish between the enemy combatants and the non-combatant population. In any war, including the terrorist and anti-terrorist "wars", this may be difficult, and is often the subject of numerous controversies.

The general principle in the law of war is that actions that are militarily necessary are in principle justified, even when they require the infliction of a degree of what has recently become known as "collateral damage" to civilians. Practically speaking, the history of the "just war doctrine", starting with Grotius, rests on the assumption that there are in fact morally justified contexts for conducting a war, and consequently, that not all warfare is immoral and devoid of humanity, as extreme humanitarianism has suggested time and again. Given this assumption, the practicality of conducting military operations requires a degree of tolerance of possible harm to civilians. The overarching principle used for limiting the application of this tolerance is that of proportionality: the risk to civilians must be *commensurate* with the reasonably expected military gain, that gain being legitimate, in the sense in which population cleansing, for example, or a "policy of torched earth", do not count as legitimate military gains.

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9   Ibid., p. 27.

Judging proportionality is, of course, a matter of assessment, and thus not a black-and-white one. It depends as much of that perceiver, as on the issues being perceived; as much on the integrity of the viewing eye, as on the drama of the situation to be comprehended. Yet, for such judgments to be even theoretically possible, there must exist at least a vague and general distinction between the combatant and the non-combatant in political violence.

The main problem with the distinction when it is applied to political violence is that most contemporary terrorists and other political insurgent movements activate as combatants those who have always been perceived as exemplary cases of non-combatants: civilians, including women and children. Contemporary soldiers of political violence are ten-year old boys armed with Kalashnikovs and women strapped with explosives. With such combatants, the boundary between "soldiers" and "civilians" collapses, as does that between the legitimate targets and "collateral damage". To the terrorists, it appears that any damage to the targeted structures or societies is legitimate. To the "civilised world", it increasingly seems that, reciprocally, any damage done not just to the logistic, but also to the societal and family infrastructures of terrorists is legitimate.

NATIONAL AND GROUP INTEREST

Moral dimensions of political violence as a war of those with scarce resources against the state or the establishment, and as "war" by the state against the politically violence, additionally suffer from a shift in the global conceptualisations of war away from that based on the just war doctrine, to that pragmatically tied to *national interest*. The structure of international relations today is largely founded on the concept of legitimate national interests. In the cases of the most powerful countries, they reach dramatically beyond the national frontiers.

The problem with the concept of national interest as the founding principle for war and conflict is that it militates against the very foundations of the law of war. In fact, the concept of interest generally militates against the concept of law inasfar as the latter is based on the standards of justice. Justice and interest are two very different ingredients of policy that may mix well in certain constellations, but they never merge; they are simply different conceptual substances. If law is based on the assumption or theories of justice, than the war of law must surely be based on intuitions or speculations

about a "just war" along the Groatian lines. The shift to justifications of war by reference to interest is a shift away from law into a political practice that is dangerously loose of the axis of morality. If no war is considered just apart from that justified by reference to a dominant and clearly perceived national interest, than, given the sufficient interest, either national or that of a international establishment, the war on terror or on political violence generally may be conceivably conducted with no reference to combatants and non-combatants whatsoever. The methods used in that war may be judged with no reference to criteria other than the effectiveness in advancing the relevant interest. The only bounds on the methods used would then arise from what the local public might find offensive.

Belonging is a powerful motivating factor that accounts for processes such as national or group mobilisation. The mobilisation and mutual cross-identification of citizens with one another on 11th September 2001 in New York and across the USA probably mirrors the cross-identification and internal mobilisation of Palestinians bombed in their settlements in Gaza, or the mobilisation of largely unemployed Arab youngsters by the "religious" sheiks who organise the anti-western "Jihad" that the world so much fears today. For those committing political violence, their actions do not represent a crime, but acts of war, in fact the only type of warfare that they see as possible under the circumstances of their struggle.

One of the problems with the psychology of group mobilisation is that the stronger the mobilisation, and the higher the stakes in the conflict, the less likely it is that in cases of conflict the group will be able to show restraint. Hence, it will be less able to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate targets on the enemy side. This has applied to war between states throughout history, and it equally applies to political violence. Legitimate inter-state wars always include a degree of zeal that causes unnecessary non-combatant suffering. Imprecise bombardments, "collateral damage" to civilian life, limb and infrastructure, including deliberate attacks against civilian targets, are all routinely explained as serving the ultimate military need. In drastic cases, terror and genocide through the indiscriminate victimisation of civilians and the helpless are also justified by military necessity in serving the fullness and the supposed long-lasting character of the desired military victory.

In political violence, all these tendencies are more pronounced, because for the belligerents conducting it the traditional non-combatant is that no more; the special circumstances under which the war called political

violence is led are perceived by its soldiers as justifying a redefinition of legitimate targets. For them, civilians are enemy belligerents, if only indirectly, because in most cases political violence seeks to tilt the balance of a structural violence, and there is a seeming plausibility in viewing the constituents of an oppressive state as legitimate enemies. This psychological, and in fact a logical construction, allows those committing political violence to live with the actions such as planting explosives in shopping centres or throwing bombs into pubs and cafés.

The redefinition of belligerents bizarrely applies to the soldiers of political violence, too. Some terrorists regularly use suicide as a form of terror. Political violence is so intriguing because it turns the conventional non-combatants both into the assaulting terrorist soldiers of political violence, and, on the other side, into perceivably legitimate targets. This is one of the reasons why political violence is so difficult to fathom as a war, and why so far none of the negotiating mechanisms have managed to control it successfully.

Perpetrators of political violence tend to see the structural violence directed against them as highly indiscriminate. They thus feel morally entitled to respond in equally indiscriminate ways, by killing civilians. The feeling of a factual moral obligation to the enemy's non-combatants, on which the law of war has always depended in practice, is often absent in political violence, because the resentment by the structurally oppressed groups runs high and the structural violence exerted inflicts deep wounds. It could be argued, without at the same time defending political violence, that structural violence inflicts deeper and more lasting wounds than actual military violence in wartime, because it also carries a particular degree of humiliation. While conventional wars are fought in open ways over relatively clear issues, structural violence drags its victims along a morally revolting avenue of discrimination, marginalisation and systemic, albeit low-level oppression, through economic, political and security exclusion.

ATTITUDES AND POLICIES

Negotiation has a place in curbing political violence not so much when it takes place between the actual perpetrators and the authorities, but between the stake-holders in the generative issues. The trouble is that, once there is political violence as a manifestation of the generative issue, most of the effort becomes directed at confronting political violence in extremely violent ways,

while virtually no effort is expanded on controlling the generative issue itself. In this way, those enmeshed in political violence manoeuvre themselves invariably into a corner, because their actions tend to be counterproductive. Such actions, experience has shown, in fact usually distract attention away from the generative issue and towards the more general issue of dealing with terrorism as a phenomenon, making constructive negotiations on the substantive grievance even less likely. This is the tragic impasse of all groups that seek political results through terror campaigns. National interest is mobilised by such campaigns against the group, and indirectly also against the issue that the campaign strives to address.

The above lines bring us to the issue of the ways in which various interest groups may or may not be able to mobilise public opinion and policy for their cause. Certain parallels with war seem in order here.

The use of terrorist tactics is similar, in many ways, to the use of new weapons and technologies in war. When in the Spring of 1915 the Germans used poison gas on the Western front, for the first time in modern history, this literally worked to strike them down from a map of civilised nations in the eye of the world public opinion. A weapon so odious to the public, obviously intended to inflict unnecessary suffering and excessive pain on enemy soldiers, thus going far further than the legitimate goal of incapacitating them, being used without a warning, against soldiers of "civilised" nations, immediately opened up room for the use of poison gas and virtually any other cruel weapon against Germany. The use of such a weapon unleashed on the Germans the wrath of not just political animosity, but of instinctive public anger, and detracted dramatically from any rhetorical legitimacy even Germans themselves could appeal to for their goals in the war. In short, by the use of poison gas the Germans became the object of hate for the world in the First World War. The Second World War persuaded many that this had not been an accident.

When the Western Alliance attacked Iraq in the first decade of the twenty-first century, it was under the pretext that Saddam Hussein's regime was developing "weapons of mass destruction", including poison gas capable of being delivered to Israeli targets by medium-range projectiles. Now it is known that the charge was in fact concocted, but it is interesting that this particular accusation was chosen to justify the war. It stood the best chance of being accepted on the global scale as a reason to delegitimise Saddam Hussein's regime and "deface" the Iraqi defenders, turning them in public perception into anonymous pawns of a deadly game intended

vaguely against western security interests. The choice of the excuse was good. It was based on war history. Consequently, the war sat well with the western public as long as the "WMD story" remained on the screens and in the newspapers.

The use of extreme measures delegitimises those who use them, but conversely, does the distinction between combatants and non-combatants really hold in contemporary democratic political systems in the same way and to the same extent as it did in Grotius' time? Even in conventional warfare, it is not always morally uncontroversial that the civilians who politically support their government, in a nation state waging a total war against another nation state, have a right not to be targeted, while their political desires and inclinations result in all the destruction and suffering being brought exclusively onto their soldiery. In modern democracies it is difficult to mobilise for a total war without at least a tacit support from the citizens. Thus the decisions traditionally thought of as those of "the princes" can no longer be ascribed to rulers alone; in a sense, they belong to entire societies. Perhaps the soldiers have far less say in the making of those decisions than anybody else, and this is especially true for the common soldiers who come from lower classes and have the most difficulty both in articulating their political views, and in contributing them to a participatory political system. As the executors of the political contract, or testament, made between the citizens (i.e. the "non-combatants") and the government · (typically protected by an implicit immunity even during warfare), the soldiers are then to be made into the only fully legitimate victims of the war. At least some moral observers will find this proposition repulsive.

As with most arguments, this one too, when applied to the realm of political violence, is cast in a more dramatic light. The opponents of the dissenting groups resorting to political violence are not just the members of the security apparatus, but the entire mainstream societies that inflict structural violence on them. The political will to oppress them, if only indirectly, is bred by the political communities and their leaders, not by the policemen and women and by the soldiers. The groups committing political violence thus have psychological, and perhaps logical, reasons to consider the mainstream society as their primary opponent, rather than the security agencies. Terrorists and other political rebels resorting to political violence must have recognised the misconception of terror attacks against civilians as a public relations tool for their grievance, and the reason they continue with such actions, apart from exerting political pressure on the governments at an

extremely high risk to themselves, is likely in their moral perception of the "guilt" of the social mainstream and the average shopping-mall civilian as the stereotype of the mainstream public for the structural violence that is at the root of motivation for most politically violent campaigns.

Civilians shape attitudes more than soldiers do, and political leaders are by and large civilians. Consequently, they are seen just as readily as targets by those committing political violence as are members of the security structures that execute the physical repression against the violent dissenting groups. In short, the distinction between the combatant and the non-combatant does not exist in the case of political violence.

It is always very difficult to try and empathise with those who commit political violence. Empathising, however, does not mean justifying political violence, but simply trying to understand the motives of those who commit it. Methodologically, the better one understands the way in which terrorists, for example, feel about unwanted victims, the better one should be equipped to design policy to influence those motives and reduce the incidence of terror attacks. From the experience so far, it would appear that rage over the indiscriminateness of political violence had done little to reduce it, and it is unlikely that any sweeping repressive actions will be able to stop the terror campaigns.

The particularities of political violence, as opposed to standard warfare or rebellion, also make alternatives difficult to pursue once the underlying grievance has escalated beyond a certain degree and initial steps have been taken in the direction of political violence. The two principal alternatives to war, or ways to ameliorate the pressure that leads to war, which are known in international law are, first, disarmament, and second, resort to judicial arbitration between the states or to the judgement of first the League of Nations, later the United Nations. It has long been considered that disarmament, and sanctions that make it difficult for the potentially warring sides to obtain arms, makes the eruption of an actual conflict less likely. Once the states have articulated seemingly irreconcilable positions on a confrontational issue in ways that suggest an imminent war, it has been considered that resort to international courts or the so-called "good services" of reputed personalities or bodies within the international institutional system is the most promising way to prevent actual war. With political violence, the implementation of either of these two strategies is very difficult.

Attempts have been made throughout the recent political history to disarm the terrorists and those active in other forms of political violence, perhaps the most recent and impressionable of which has been the campaign by the UK to disarm the terrorists in the Northern Ireland. Terrorists in Kosovo have also been allegedly disarmed, but these terrorist organisations were strongly hierarchically headquartered. Disarmament attempts are only possible with regard to structures that resemble states in certain organisational ways, namely those that have a discernible hierarchy, chain of command, and political representation (negotiations with the IRA were conducted with its formal "political wing" — the Shin Fein, and negotiations with the KLA in Kosovo were led with an entire political structure of Kosovo Albanians, led by many politicians who are now prominent members of the official Kosovo political elite and current government). Such structures can also discipline concrete actors on the ground, the foot soldiers of political violence. They have the degree of control that is necessary to make them credible negotiators.

Many organisations or movements that are active in political violence, however, lack continuous and highly disciplined command structures, they lack "political wings" articulate enough to be able to conduct proper political negotiations, and often do not have full control of their foot soldiers. They are driven by sentiments of deprivation and by deep-seated feelings of aggravation, compounded by the conviction, on the level of foot soldiers as well as leaders, that political violence is the only way to address the grievances. Such movements are difficult to control through negotiations with official structures, and consequently it is virtually impossible to effect a voluntary disarmament within them. ay disarmament that is not voluntary, however, more or less equates to warfare.

On the other hand, resorting to the judicial settlement of disputes, while to some extent viable with states in conflict, is completely unviable with dissenting groups that use political violence. They are not international subjects, and as such do not qualify to appear as parties before international courts. At the same time, situations in which their case might be represented by legitimate other parties are very few and limited in possible scenarios of advocacy of their cause. Arbitration by trusted influential countries is an option that some insurgent movements have repeatedly toyed with over the past decades, perhaps the most persistent pattern of which is that of the Palestinian Hammas movement, which has sought support and arbitration by Russia to resolve its chronic conflict with Israel. These attempts, despite

the half-hearted gestures being made by the Russian Federation, have not amounted to much, and have certainly not succeeded either in legitimising the Hammas on the international political scene, or in strengthening its position *vis-à-vis* Israel. Experience, thus, shows the very limited value of both traditional methods to prevent conflict between states when they are tried as means to prevent political violence. It seems that political violence is a structural problem with complicated social roots and para political dimensions that make the subjectivity and mission of those that use political violence both difficult to understand, and even more difficult to accept. Consequently, dialogue with those who use political violence, while obviously desirable as a prevention tool, remains unlikely, even largely inconceivable, at least in the existing framework of what we are used to think of as "political negotiations".

POLICY RESPONSES TO POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

In his discussion of war and law, Geoffrey Best rightly notes: "...historically war has been the staple means of registering the ebbs and flows of relative wealth and power among peoples...".[10] Those "peoples" with the most wealth and power have always tended to oppress the other "peoples", with less ability to influence others. Similarly, those without a real political and military power have sought ways to undermine those with the most wealth and power in ways that would hurt the latter, without requiring too many resources on the part of the former. Modern terrorism is exactly that — a way of waging war by the weak, against the strong.

At the time of writing of this paper, Iran, being perhaps the champion of those Islamic countries and "peoples" who tend to perceive themselves as the weak and the oppressed in the modern constellation of international security, is working persistently on an uranium enrichment programme. This it does against the pressure of the international community, yet it does so with the belief that developing such a weapon is the only way of fending off pressures and threats by the international mainstream. In fact, a classic security dilemma is developing between Iran and the West after the attack on Iraq, with Iran feeling that it is marked for attack, and thus trying to arm itself with a nuclear weapon, and the international community threatening it additionally in order to stop its uranium programme. The attempt by Iran is

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10   Ibid., p. 56.

what could be described as a strategy by the weak to run with the strong, thereby stretching the resources to the maximum.

Terrorists have a different strategy. They strike at the heart of western democracies, in most cases at civilian targets and the development infrastructure, thereby risking or sacrificing the lives of several of their "soldiers", but using very limited budgets and other resources. The danger of terrorism arises exactly out of this facet of it: terrorism can be used by almost anyone with a grievance, at practically any time, almost anywhere. There is no effective prevention method for it.

The last depressing fact accounts for the predominant international policy responses to terrorism and political violence. As there is no efficient prevention, war is often chosen as the next best approximation, and countries blamed for "harbouring terrorists" are now routinely threatened by military aggression or attacked by more or less broad coalition forces in response to larger scale terrorist attacks. The results of such strategy can be clearly documented since 11 September 2001. In response to this historical terrorist attack on New York and Washington, the US practically destroyed Afghanistan, a country blamed for harbouring Osama bin Laden and his Al-Quaeda network. Today, five years after the attack on Afghanistan, bin Laden remains at large and Al-Quaeda has since kidnapped and murdered hundreds of people, many of them international workers within the international missions associated with western interventions and occupations in Islamic countries.

The subsequent attack on Iraq, a country that at the time had no documented links with al-Quaeda, resulted in mass suffering and a destruction of large parts of this country. Today there is a developed Al-Quaeda presence in Iraq. International personnel are kidnapped, televised in bondage and crying for help, and killed before cameras. The Catari news station Al Jazzera regularly carries messages by Osama bin Laden, calling on the Muslim brethren to resist the occupations by "the infidel" and to sacrifice their lives to "purge the land" of the invading troops. The sabre-rattling by the US and Britain against Syria and Iran is likely to produce equally destructive results, and these countries may get a far more serious terrorist problem than they have had so far.

War is not the antidote to terrorism; in fact, because conventional war is not suited to counter terrorism, it fuels terrorist sentiments by victimising largely the innocent. Terrorism flourishes in occupied territories; this is why there is such a terrorist problem in the Gaza Strip, and this is why

all the occupied Islamic countries, including Iraq, have become hotbeds of terrorism after the occupation.

Despite all the empirical data that indicates that war does not achieve practically anything in fighting terrorism, war remains the dominant tool used at least as a threat against suspected terrorist regimes. The threat of war remains above the heads of the Syrian regime and is almost certain as a policy response to the Iranian nuclear programme. If these wars in the offing now eventualise in the future, both Syria and Iran will become very serious global terrorist threats.

One way to address the issue of terrorism is to reconsider its value-matrix, and this means to understand its motives and openly consider the degree of legitimate concerns present within the motivational structure of the terrorist groups. In other words, this means to negotiate with the terrorists as equals, and that is difficult for any legitimate government, because the methods used by terrorists are so repulsive and cast their perpetrators in an unacceptable light. Whether this problem can be overcome through a reconsideration of the ways in which the terrorist motives could be reframed, or rephrased, so as to be acceptable in a modern political system, will determine the prospects of what is now popularly called "war on terror". As a first step, the very rhetoric of "war" should be abandoned, and the vocabulary of political negotiations adopted instead, even if the prospect of success of any such negotiations seem dim at the moment.

Perhaps the most difficult realisation will be the one that terrorists are considered by may as legitimate soldiers for the cause of the oppressed, and that perhaps the only way to counter them is to treat them as such. Once accepted at the negotiating table as soldiers, there is a possibility that they will actually start feeling and acting as soldiers, rather than assassins, and it is in this value shift in the minds of both those using political violence and those fighting it that the only chance to effectively counter political violence may lie. Mutual perceptions colour mutual stances, and these perceptions between those using terrorism and other forms of political violence and those trying to contain it could hardly be more confrontational and derogatory than they are now. A de-escalation of the perceptions is the necessary first step for a reconsideration of the values governing both sides in the "war on terror" before a truce can be called. For such a de-escalation, both public readiness and the right constellation of relatively tolerant political elites are needed, to create the momentum of negotiations. This might, however difficult it may seem, set precedents to be used long into the

future in the settlement of disputes marred by the bloody consequences of political violence. War as an option having failed, the alternative, both logically and morally speaking, does not seem to exist.

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POLITIČKO NASILJE KAO VREDNOSNI PROBLEM ZA SPOLJNU POLITIKU

REZIME

U savremenoj istoriji političkih pokreta i sistema političko nasilje se pojavljuje u jasno uočljivim fazama, koji odgovaraju promenjenim strukturama moći u moći u međunarodnim odnosima. Sve njegove forme su različiti odgovori na takozvano "strukturno nasilje", to jest na sistemske aranžmane u međunarodnim odnosima, ili u okviru jednog političkog sistema, kojima se sistematski ugrožavaju prava ili interesi neke grupe, ili joj se onemogućava da ta prava i interese efektivno artikuliše kroz institucije. Postoji rašireno shvatanje da je svaki *status quo* koji ne uzima u obzir potrebe za promenama koje proističu iz protesta marginalizovanih grupa, istovremeno i forma strukturnog nasilja.

Političko nasilje je specifična forma pobune, pre svega zato što su sredstva kojima se njegovi počinioci služe izuzetno kontroverzna. Napadi na civile i civilnu infrastrukturu ruše tradicionalnu konceptualnu barijeru između učesnika u sukobu i onih koji treba da budu pošteđeni, dovodeći tako tradicionalne državne institucije u poziciju da i one prekoračuju uobičajeni domen upotrebe sile u odgovor na terorizam. Napadi SAD na Avganistan i napadi Izraela na palestinske oblasti ilustruju o rastućoj nediskriminatornosti takvih vojnih odgovora na političko nasilje, a posebno na terorizam kao njegovu najdrastičniju formu.

Jedan deo savremenog diskursa o političkom nasilju zadržava se na političkim premisama koje ne mogu mnogo toga da objasne, pre svega na konstatovanju či-

njenice da teroristi u svom delovanju ne zadovoljavaju kriterijume koji se primenju-
ju u definisanju legitimnih boraca za politički cilj, pošto ne prave selekciju između
vojnih i nevojnih, institucionalnih i neinstitucionalnih, ciljeva. Taj diskurs je svaka-
ko materijalno ispravan, ali u ovom tekstu se argumentiše da on jednostavno ništa ne
objašnjava, a pre svega ne objašnjava strukturu motivacije počinioca političkog na-
silja. Da bi se razumela ta struktura, potrebno je bar spekulisati o razlozima zbog ko-
jih počinioci političkog nasilja na razlikuju vrste ciljeva i ne trude se da poštede civi-
le. Teza koju autor iznosi u tekstu je da je upravo odgovor na ovo pitanje istovreme-
no i odgovor na strukturne uzroke političkog nasilja.

Tradicionalno shvatanje između direktnih učesnika u borbama i civila datira
iz vremena Huga Grocijusa (Hugo Grotius) i njegove teorije o pravednom ratu. Ono
se zasniva na vrednosnim pretpostavkama jednog vremena kada je odluke o ratu i mi-
ru donosio vrlo uzak plemićki sloj okupljen oko suverena. Sam Grocijusov jezik ("the
princes", ili plemićki vladari, kada govori o donosiocima odluka) sugeriše društveni i
politički milje njegovog vremena, u kome obični građani nisu imali mnogo uticaja na
odluke o stupanju u rat, pa samim tim nisu ni snosili odgovornost za taj rat. Stoga je
bilo intuitivno prihvatljivo oštro razgraničavati između vojnika i civila u ratu.

U savremenom demokratskom društvu, odluke o ratovima ne donose više
suvereni, nego se one artikulišu kroz politički sistem koji legitimišu, i u kome posred-
no učestvuju, svi građani. Stoga je stupanje u rat jedne velike demokratske države da-
nas, moralno posmatrano, sa tačke običnih građana, sasvim različito od stupanja u rat
plemićke države u doba Grocijusa.

Strukturno nasilje koje proističe iz pozicije uticajnih država takođe legitimiše
većina građana. Politika u demokratskom društvu je izraz opštih stremljenja građana.
Stoga i odgovornost za strukturno nasilje ne leži samo na političkim elitama, nego, u
izvesnom smislu, na svim konstituentima političkog sistema. Počinioci političkog na-
silja koji, u većini slučajeva, nemaju resurse niti vojne kapacitete da se upuste u kla-
sični rat, upuštaju se u akcije protiv civila upravo sa svešću o tome da su oni konstitu-
enti svojih država i politike tih država. To uverenje omogućava svima koji se bave po-
litičkim nasiljem da opravdaju napade na civile i ubistva. Istovremeno, doživljaj ta-
kvih nediskriminativnih napada na strani etabliranih država koje su njegove žrtve je
toliko revoltirajuće da dodatno unazađuje svaku mogućnost da se uvidi strukturno na-
silje koje je koren političkog nasilja. Na taj način se problem pogoršava, agresivni od-
govor napadnutih društava protiv onih koje vide kao odgovorne za političko nasilje
eskalira, i stvara se klasičan zao krug u diskursu između sukobljenih strana.

Autor u ovom tekstu sugeriše da je prvi preduslov za uspešnu kontrolu poli-
tičkog nasilja de-eskalacija uzajamnih percepcija i primena metoda koje su teoretiča-
ri razrešenja konflikta razvili za rešavanje drugih vrsta konflikta, poput sudskih spo-
rova. Direktan razgovor sukobljenih strana je pretpostavka za nestanak strukturnih
uzroka nasilja, ali je u praksi sprovođenje takvih direktnih pregovora izuzetno teško,
zbog duboke delegitimacije terorista i drugih počinilaca političkog nasilja koje pro-
ističe iz zločinačkih posledica njihovih metoda borbe.