

Some Unexpected Consequences of the Worldwide War Against Terrorism¹

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Terrorismoaren aurkako gerra orokorraren ondorioak –2001eko irailaren 11az geroztikakoak– aztertzen ditut lan honetan. Errealismo politikoak, porrot egin duen indarkerian oinarrituriko estrategia mantentzearen egokitasuna ongi pentsatzea eskatzen duelakoan nago. Murgildurik gauden giro honetan, terrorismoarekin loturiko kulturatzat hartzen direnen aurkako giroan alegia, indarkeria uzteari uko egiteak herri txikien funtsezko balioak –horien hizkuntza eta kultura– ahultzeko arriskua dakar.

Giltza-Hitzak: Irailak 11. Terrorismoa. ETA. Al-Qaeda. Errealismoa. Indarkeria eta kultura txikiak.

Examino las consecuencias de la guerra global contra el terror después del 11 de Septiembre de 2001. Mantengo que el realismo político requiere sopesar el acierto de continuar con una estrategia fracasada en base a la violencia. La negativa de abandonar la violencia corre el riesgo de socavar los valores básicos de los pueblos minoritarios –sus idiomas y culturas– en un clima de oposición mundial a culturas percibidas como vinculadas al terrorismo.

Palabras Clave: 11 de Septiembre. Terrorismo. ETA. Al-Qaeda. Realismo. Violencia y culturas minoritarias.

J'examine les conséquences de la guerre globale contre la terreur après le 11 septembre 2001. Je maintiens que le réalisme politique doit évaluer la nécessité de continuer une stratégie ratée basée sur la violence. Le refus d'abandonner la violence courre le risque d'affaiblir les valeurs de base des peuples minoritaires –leurs langues et leurs cultures– dans un climat d'opposition mondiale aux cultures que l'on considère comme étant liées au terrorisme.

Mots Clés: 11 septembre. Terrorisme. ETA. Al-Qaeda. Réalisme. Violence et cultures minoritaires.

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"We come to it at last, the great battle of our time."

J.R.R. Tolkien
The Return of the King

I would like to begin by thanking the Northern Basque Section (Iparralde) of the Association Eusko Ikaskuntza, as well as its president, Jean-Claude Larronde, for their kind invitation to address you today. I am very touched by his welcome and the honor that you all demonstrate by your presence here this afternoon. I find myself today among the Basque intellectual aristocracy of Iparralde. It is in moments like these that I find myself thinking of those who have left us, among them Chanoine Pierre Lafitte, Eugen Goyheneche, Abbe Pierre Larzabal and Marc Legasse. This generation owes them a tremendous debt for their tireless devotion to the Basque people, their culture, their language and their politics.

The last time that I had the honor of addressing such a gathering of Basque colleagues and friends was nearly ten years ago at the time of the publication of my book, *The Hills of Conflict; Basque Nationalism in France*, by the University of Nevada Press². In the intervening years, the issue of nationalism and ethnic militancy has been eclipsed by the rise of global terrorism and political violence. Using the Basque case and others, I would like to examine "Some Unexpected Consequences of the Worldwide War Against Terrorism."³.

There are moments which mark our collective consciences and which represent for good or for worse the emotional markers of our age. For the Basques, among those events were most certainly the Spanish Civil War, the German bombardment of Guernica, and the Franco years. In the north, Basque memory was marked by the crisis of separation of Church and State, the German occupation, the resistance and then liberation, and still later by the intellectual impact of the crisis of decolonization on France and her people.

2. JACOB, James E. *The Hills of Conflict; Basque Nationalism in France*, Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1994.

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For the people of the United States, there are also certain events which mark the collective and operational memory of my people as well. For recent generations, there have been events which have left their traces like the wood sculptures carved by Basque shepherds in the American west, or like the living sculptures carved in stone by Chillida along the sea shore in Donostia.

Among these memory-searing events for the Americans are: 1) the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941; 2) the birth of the atomic age; 3) the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963; and 4) most recently the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The appearance of terrorism on American soil profoundly shocked the American public and galvanized the reaction of the American government and its allies against the new threat of terrorism. In the aftermath of the cold war, and the fall of communism, terrorism became one of the new priorities of American foreign policy.

If you will permit me several reflections on the nature of contemporary American politics, it may help explain the American political and emotional reaction to the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath. The genius of American democracy is that, in its wisdom, anyone may be elected President of the United States. George W. Bush, despite being a graduate of Yale University, boasts of not being an intellectual and it is to his credit that he knows it. Neither is he cosmopolitan and he is proud of that as well. In truth, President Bush, at the time of his election, had not traveled outside the United States but *three times in his life* before being elected president. He is representative of many within his political generation and his party. For example, in the American Congressional (legislative) elections of 1990, fifty percent of the newly elected members of Congress had *never* owned a passport.

However, and to their credit, President Bush and his political allies are men of strong convictions, both political and religious. This mixture of religious, political and ideological beliefs influences their view of the outside world, and has guided them in their actions these last years.

The events of September 11 have served in part to confirm part of their convictions about the larger world, and at the same time to serve as an agent of change by forcing a rapid and new global engagement on these instinctive neo-isolationists. This was a significant change from the words of George Bush as he first campaigned for the presidency in 2000. What the attacks of September 11 provoked was a kind of secular conversion experience in the President and the conservative right wing as they came to see that American national security required both dependable allies and active engagements abroad. In a Manichean manner, President Bush insisted that in the war against terrorism, henceforth countries and peoples would be either "with us" or "against us". He even used the word "crusade" in speaking of the challenge which he saw facing the U.S. and its allies immediately after the attacks. The choice of the word "crusade" was later seen as a politically unfortunate one which served to greatly agitate Arab public opinion for whom the word provokes painful historical memories of occupation and domination.

The conceptual problem with President Bush's perspective is his effort to define the world of the United States and its allies in stark and uncompromising colors. As we know, the world in which we live is rarely unmistakably black or white. Politics and diplomacy exist most often in an ambiguous world painted in various shades of grey.

In the aftermath of September 11, I see certain results that I believe were largely unexpected in the mobilization against terrorism. The subsequent diplomatic initiatives that emerged as the west mobilized against this terrorist threat have brought with them consequences that have been unexpected for many peoples and movements around the world, among them the Basques. Many of these peoples and movements had nothing to do with Al Qaeda or Islamic fundamentalism at all. Yet, the reaction to these terrorist attacks is telling. For, in the wake of the attacks of September 11, the political behavior of diverse countries –especially some of America's closest allies– invites us to draw certain, perhaps surprising, lessons. Let me examine some of those lessons by making reference to the perspective of the Eastern philosopher, Kautilya, and interpreting his ideas in light of contemporary international relations. Kautilya's original formulation held that:

A friend of a friend is a friend;
A friend of an enemy is an enemy;
An enemy of a friend is an enemy;
An enemy of an enemy is a friend.

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, a number of conclusions may be drawn about contemporary international relations and the behavior of states and alliances.

1) ***A friend isn't necessarily a friend.*** This is notably the case with certain countries in Western Europe and the Middle East. The fact that the last legislative elections in Germany unfolded in a climate of accelerating anti-Americanism reeked of the basest political opportunism by both of the major German political parties. Their self-serving pandering to the German electorate did not pass unperceived in Washington. Speaking of the behavior of the German chancellor in the elections, the response of U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was typical when he described U.S.-German relations as "poisoned". For the first time in recent memory, following the German elections, the German chancellor did not travel immediately to Paris to reaffirm Germany's historic commitment to Europe, but rather to London to ask Tony Blair to intercede with the American administration to help repair U.S.-German relations. It was after all, he insisted, only politics.

The behavior of Saudi Arabia also raises the question of what exactly ***friendship*** is between countries. Lord Palmerston wrote in the nineteenth century that "Countries have no friends, only interests". Yet the United States has defined its foreign policy in certain regions of the world by a close commonality of interests, and that has been the case with America's historic ties with Saudi Arabia. Successive U.S. administrations defined their rela-

tionship with Saudi Arabia as a kind of polar star in the firmament of the Middle East. The U.S. looked to Saudi Arabia to moderate more radical Arab regimes, and to control the price of OPEC oil.

At the same time, the internal pressures on the royal family of Saudi Arabia, the house of Saud, have become increasingly complex. Faced with growing internal discontent, economic stagnation, and the end of oil revenues in sight, the Saudis sought to quietly pursue their own national self-interest. Specifically, they chose to play "both ends against the middle," in defining their national interest based on appeasement of both the United States and Islamic radicals within the kingdom. Faced with the threat of Al Qaeda, the attitude of some members of the royal family has been to play the political ostrich, burying their head in the sand while world events swirled about them. For others of the royal family, they chose to ally themselves more closely with the Wahhabi mullahs who were the source of the legitimacy of their regime. The long refusal of the royal family to admit to the presence of Islamic militants within the kingdom was clearly a case of face-saving denial. Despite these denials, the attacks against the Khobar Towers in 1996 and the recent attacks against foreign housing in Riyadh demonstrate the extent of Al Qaeda influence among young Saudis of the Wahhabi sect. Fifteen of the nineteen hijackers on September 11 were Wahhabi Saudis. The House of Saud has come to realize that the greatest threat to its survival may be their own Wahhabi allies.

In reality, from their perspective, circumstances obliged the Saudis to be diplomatically deceitful in order to insure the survival of their regime. While declaring themselves a close ally of the United States, the financial network stretching between the Kingdom and Al Qaeda had become as well-established as it was carefully hidden. It is now believed that the funds passed from Saudi Arabia to Al Qaeda paymasters in Spain who used the money not only to fund the preparations for the September 11 attacks, but also to fund Al Qaeda's operations in Europe. Two alternatives exist to explain why this money flowed from Saudi Arabia to Bin Laden's militants. One is the call for charity that is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. Many religious Saudis fulfill this obligation, especially around the season of Ramadan, by contributing to Islamic charities that are active around the Islamic world. Yet, many of these charities are allied with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, and this is true of charities active in such countries as Bosnia, Albania, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Chechnya and elsewhere in the Middle East. For many contributors, this charity was a pious act based on the tenets of their religious faith. For others, however, the religious call for charitable contributions permitted them to contribute to Bin Laden while outwardly professing naïve and plausible deniability. What is apparent is that some of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest families, including some members of the royal family, have contributed to these Islamic charities and thus to Al Qaeda. For some, it was a question of *realpolitik*: an effort to trade domestic peace in the kingdom by supporting Bin Laden's "charitable works" elsewhere. In Bosnia alone, NATO raids on Saudi charities in 2001 found computer hard drives that included both charitable documents as well as Al

Qaeda plans for attacks on American and British targets. More recently, Germany expelled a Saudi diplomat because of ongoing contacts between Saudi diplomats and the Islamic fundamentalist milieu that contributed several of the suicide attackers of September 11. Even the wife of Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar wrote checks that ultimately wound up in the hands of some of the 9-11 hijackers. But Al Qaeda's attacks within the kingdom reveal that whatever understanding had been reached is now broken, and with it the denial of Islamic radicalism threatening the regime.

The same sober question about intentions can be raised regarding Pakistan, as well. Recent news reports raise the same question of how close, in fact, is the commonality of interest between the United States and Pakistan. It is now clear that Pakistan's nuclear establishment has been responsible, in association with the Chinese, for the greatest violations of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in post World War Two history. At the same time that the government of General Musharrif was aiding the United States in its war against terrorism, it is now clear that for much longer Pakistan had been sharing nuclear technology with North Korea, Iran and Libya. It is *impossible* that this occurred without the knowledge and approval of the Pakistani government and military. Pakistan was in the position of offering half-hearted support in the war against terrorism (anything more would have destabilized their regime), while at the same time offering nuclear technology to some of the most dangerous regimes in the Middle East. In the case of Pakistan, as well, ***a friend isn't necessarily always a friend.***

One of the greatest sources of a culture's knowledge is to be found in the folk expressions that capture, sometimes in an earthy manner, the wisdom of our ancestors. I greatly profited from many Basque aphorisms that appear in *The Hills of Conflict*. For our purposes, there is an American colloquial expression that says that if it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck. Today, we have every reason to hold the definition of "friendship" to higher standards. Supporting Al Qaeda or spreading nuclear weapons to unstable states are acts of a hostile regime. These regimes have a choice to make. They can't rest straddling both sides of the fence.

2) ***An enemy isn't necessarily an enemy.*** Here we must consider the example of France. In matters of diplomacy, it has been said there are two types of friends: "fair weather" friends, and what have been called "foul weather" friends. It is easy to be a fair weather friend. Here, there is little cost to pay for a symbolic gesture of friendship. One sees in the "coalition of the willing" that have lent their moral support to combat operations in Iraq a certain number of countries, like Costa Rica, who can make the gesture of solidarity at literally no cost. In other cases, countries have made a deliberate choice in order to avoid paying later for their silence today. As President Turgut Ozal of Turkey said in explaining Turkey's support of the U.S. in Desert Storm in 1991, Turkey had the opportunity to be on the winning side for the first time in two hundred years, and they weren't going to miss the chance.

Despite the diplomatic and political differences that separate France and the United States over Iraq, my habit as an historian compels me to take a longer perspective in time. In reality, France is the oldest friend of the United States. Without the aid of France, the American Revolution would have almost certainly failed. I remember standing on the walls of the fort in Pasa-
jes San Juan that was owned at the time by Marc Legasse and learning that it was from there that the Marquis de Lafayette sailed to help fight in the American Revolutionary War.

I consider France to be a friend of the United States, but it is clearly an independent friend. For people as for states, among the greatest of friends are those who tell you not what you want to hear, but the truth as they see it, no matter how painful. Friendship is also a two-way street. My grandfather fought on the side of France at Chateau Thierry in World War One. He drove an ambulance there just as did Ernest Hemingway. My father was in the Navy in World War Two. France fought with distinction at the side of the United States in Desert Storm. France can also be counted on to intervene in some of the most violent civil wars in Africa, and even Haiti, for humanitarian reasons. "Foul weather friends" are willing to pay a price for that friendship.

The reality is that these two countries have much in common, and it is perhaps this fact –how much we have in common– that is one of the sources of our current competition. As the Austro-Hungarian Empress Maria Theresa once put it, "King Charles and I are in perfect agreement. We both want Milan". We conflict not because we are so different, but because we are so much *alike*.

The foreign policy of both the United States and France is of a worldwide scale, and conflict is often the rule in international relations. Fortunately, the recent diplomatic bitterness over Iraq is already in the process of diminishing. This is in the interest of the United States as well as of France. Another principle of classical diplomacy is to exclude no one permanently. Today's adversary may become tomorrow's friend.

Having already discussed my view of the foreign policy of the American administration, fairness obliges me to reflect on the style of recent French foreign policy. Viewed from abroad, it seems that the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Dominique Villepin, took great pleasure in lecturing the American administration. In doing so, he seemed sometimes to posture like a martinet from the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* or like a secular priest archly castigating sinners. This hardly served the interest of France.

Nonetheless, as I have predicted, these clouds are going to disappear because it is in the interest of both partners, as well as of the western alliance. For those among you who think the closest allies of the United States will be the Saudis or even the Russians, I have some ocean-front land at Ste. Engrace in Soule that I would like to sell you. **An enemy isn't necessarily always an enemy.**

Some Unexpected Results of the World-wide War Against Terrorism

This leads me to the central question, and that is the extent of the world alliance against terrorism and its unexpected results. Currently, almost one hundred and sixty countries have associated in some manner with the world-wide campaign against terrorism. Among the elements of this cooperation are much closer coordination in matters of police work and intelligence. Certainly, one of the most important aspects of this worldwide campaign is the United Nations accord to follow and interrupt the international financial networks of terrorist movements. Follow the money, find the movement.

This diplomatic success is based on a rational calculation of national self-interest. Between Bin Laden and the unified community of sovereign states (including those who are the greatest contributors of aid to countries in the process of development), there is really no choice to make, even for those who can barely disguise their sympathy for Islamic fundamentalism, or for the instability of the current international order. A rational calculation of self-interest has led the overwhelming majority of countries to sign on to this new world order under the guise of the war against terrorism. Some countries like Syria stand out by their silence, although even Syria has quietly aided the west in its struggle against Al Qaeda. Libya is perhaps the best example of a country which has fundamentally changed direction based on a rethinking of its self-interest. This began with admitting blame for the downing of Pan Am 103 over Scotland and the UTA flight over Niger. Payments to the families appear now to be bringing these cases to a close. Even more surprising was Libya's recent decision to give up its nuclear weapons program which we now know was greatly aided by Pakistan's nuclear establishment. As a result, Libya may be the first country to be removed from the U.S. State Department's list of foreign state sponsors of terrorism.

It may come as some surprise that as of the present moment, Spain is the European country that has arrested the greatest number of Al Qaeda militants on its soil. The result is that the Bush administration made no secret of both its support and its gratitude to the Aznar administration in Spain. The American administration was grateful to Spain not only for its domestic efforts in disrupting Al Qaeda, but also because Aznar was, along with Britain's Tony Blair and the President of Poland, among the few European leaders to publicly and vocally support the U.S. and to risk the domestic political fallout from their support of combat in Iraq. American appreciation of Spain's role in the war on terrorism has continued with the arrival of Spanish troops in Iraq. The result has been a closer friendship between the U.S. and Spain. According to *The New York Times*, the Bush administration, in order to demonstrate its gratitude, furnished intelligence to Madrid that helped them to dismantle the Donostia commando of ETA.

American interest in the stability of Spain is of long duration. The entry of Spain into NATO only reinforced the position of Spain as one of the pillars of democratic Europe. Despite the level of domestic terrorism in Spain, the case of ETA was considered on the other side of the Atlantic as essentially

an internal question for Spain, and a problem that appeared to be coming under the control of the Spanish government. But the arrival of Al Qaeda militants on Spanish soil suddenly increased the importance of Spain in the worldwide campaign against terrorism. At this time, there was a marked similarity between the lists of the world's most important terrorist movements compiled by both the United States and the European Union.

The arrest, however, of IRA and ETA militants in Colombia who were training FARC guerrillas in the making of bombs changed ETA from a European regional movement to what the U.S. now considered a terrorist movement of worldwide import. Thirty years after the decision made by ETA militants to not assassinate Henry Kissinger at the same time that they killed Admiral Carro Blanco in Operation Ogro, ETA finally found itself on America's list of the world's major terrorist threats.

Viewed in context, the question of ETA still remains more important as a domestic threat to Spain. But its mingling in the instability of Colombian society was a serious misstep given the importance of terrorism in Colombia to the United States. As one of the largest sources of drugs to the U.S., Colombia in 2004 is the third largest recipient of American military assistance worldwide. At the same time, in 2001, fully **eight-five percent of all anti-American terrorist attacks in the world** took place in Colombia. Most were bombings carried out by FARC, especially against oil and gas pipelines there. Anyone training FARC in bomb-making moved to a higher threat level to the United States and not just its allies. As Kautilya wrote, "**The friend of my enemy is my enemy. The enemy of my friend is my enemy**".

An additional result of the war against terrorism is that it has furthered the process of globalization by denying the legitimacy of minority cultures and languages identified with terrorism. The judgment that one makes on terrorism varies depending on your perspective. The role of violence by irregulars, or "citizen soldiers", was key to the success of the American Revolution. Yet, British Major General William Gates, Commander of the British Army in the colonies, called the "Minutemen" "assassins" and he promised to hang them without delay. Yet, in American history, these citizen soldiers are considered as the fathers of American liberty. But history is written by the winners, and words and symbols serve the interests of power. I leave aside the question of the morality of violence in order to consider the question of its efficacy. Does violence serve to help or hinder the cause that embraces it? Violence represents –in the worst of cases– an attack against the stability and the legitimacy of states, as well as their survival. It is for this reason that we can well understand the hostile reaction against any movement that attempts to use the armed struggle in order to overthrow an existing state.

This leads us to certain conclusions about violence as a tool of politics:

- 1) It puts at risk the legitimate expression of other cultural and linguistic initiatives. Violence represents what in English is called "a reverse halo effect". It contaminates all other initiatives in its wake. Rather

than encouraging the rise of moderate ethnic elites, violence of the type used by ETA threatens to contaminate the idea of Basque identity in Spanish politics. ETA's threat in 2004 to conduct a broad campaign against Spain's summer tourist industry is the economic equivalent of a "scorched earth" offense, and has invited the Spanish government to reply in kind. At the same time, widespread criticism greeted ETA's recent announcements of a truce with Catalonia, after talks with Catalan leaders. This is an odd offer, at best, since ETA's previous attacks against Catalan targets in Barcelona (including a working class supermarket) were greeted with universal condemnation, and still serve as examples of some of ETA's worst targeting decisions since its creation.

- 2) Violence rarely succeeds in changing the politics of the government. Certainly, there are notable exceptions, including the IRA or the African National Congress in South Africa. In the case of the IRA, it's the length and force of the violence used by the republican movement –and this despite a century of efforts by the British government– that finally led the two camps to the negotiating table. By contrast, despite more than 800 deaths since 1968, ETA has never succeeded in creating a sufficient level of violence to force the Spanish government to the bargaining table. On the other hand, successive Spanish administrations have chosen to define this as a question of honor, and hence are unwilling to make the slightest concession that might lead to a permanent end of hostilities. To use another example, despite an official policy that denies the success of Palestinian violence, Israel knows that any "road map" to peace must lead through negotiation with moderate Palestinian leaders. That is the only hope for marginalizing the terrorists and achieving a durable peace and an end to this ceaseless pyrrhic war.

Yet, in most cases, violence does not succeed in achieving its own goals. Moreover, in many cases it serves to internally fragment the movement and render it vulnerable to the incessant pressure of the state. Most often, violence invites a crushing retaliation by the state, and the defeat of the movement can be measured from the time it begins a campaign of violence targeting the state.

- 3) To be legitimate, violence must, at a minimum, be supported by the community from which the movement emerges. In truth, Basque public opinion is highly conflicted by ETA's violence, and ETA's electoral scores reflect the rejection of violence by a majority of the Basque electorate. For true popular support entails a threshold that is well above the ten to fifteen percent that ETA and its allies have traditionally polled. As Mao Zedong said of successful insurgencies, the guerrilla must swim as a fish in water. To be precise, for any insurgent movement to be legitimate –not to speak of its eventual potential success– it must envelop itself in the popular support of the people. In the case of ETA, it appears that nothing it does can substantially increase its

electoral support beyond its bedrock supporters. But demonstrations of tens of thousands of Basques protesting ETA violence send a worldwide message. *Vox populi, vox dei*. Any movement that ignores this fundamental political maxim does so at its peril. The voice of the people is the voice of the gods.

Since September 11, one can identify a number of results that affect diverse minority groups and cases. Those groups, like ETA, which are henceforth identified as being a “worldwide threat” are targeted today as never before in their history. In the case of ETA, the forces arrayed against them include the institutions of Spain, France, the European Union, the United Nations, and now the global coalition assembled by the United States. In such circumstances, the violence of a movement without great public support risks contaminating the jewels of a minority people –their language and their culture. In such a circumstance, it remains for moderate and non-violent elites to defend these cultural treasures against an onslaught which risks delegitimizing historic Basque cultural symbols. In the case of the Basques, the threat is to a language and cultural tradition that stretches back before recorded history. At the same time, the inability of ETA to win substantial public support uncouples violence from previous political goals as violence becomes increasingly a goal in and of itself as the movement spirals downward into *nihilism*. The challenge of Basque politics in this climate is to demonstrate the value of being *abertzale* while rejecting the use of violence.

The second category of minority groups and peoples who are now targeted by the struggle against terrorism are those who are identified with Al Qaeda and Islamic fundamentalism in general. There may be as many as forty such movements worldwide. Among the most important in this second category are the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat, the Kurdish movement Al Ansar al Islam, the Chechen movement in Russia, diverse movements in Pakistan, the remnants of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Jemaah Islamiyya in Southeast Asia. In each of these cases, there is an overt and proud identification with the ideological and social theses of Bin Laden.

There are still other groups like the Front for the Liberation of Eastern Turkmenistan in Western China whose appearance on the list of worldwide movements seems more a gesture to reward positive behavior by China than a reflection of the threat posed by this small group, itself. In the Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf group, a small band of perhaps a hundred militants, saw itself transformed by the press from a group of kidnapers for ransom into an Islamic militant group affiliated with Al Qaeda. In truth, Abu Sayyaf has greatly troubled the whole kidnapping industry in the Philippines by attracting the attention of both the Philippine and U.S. governments. In these two cases, the link with Al Qaeda is less evident and serves to give to the movements an importance that they often don't deserve.

For each of these two larger categories of movements –those who are part of the network of Al Qaeda, and those who have no ties to Al Qaeda but who have been caught up in the worldwide campaign against terrorism– the

events of September 11 have changed their futures. Regardless of ties to Al Qaeda or not, any movement that threatens the stability of one of the alliance of anti-terrorist states will attract attention as never before. This attention, perhaps once flattering, will be fatal for many of these movements.

CONCLUSIONS

In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, the level of cooperation between states in combating terrorism has greatly increased. As of today, more than 160 countries have signed up in the worldwide war against terrorism. Some have done so half-heartedly, or with the confidence that little tangible will be asked of them. For other countries, the stakes are much greater. Al Qaeda cells may currently exist in as many as forty countries, many of which have indigenous terrorist movements of their own. It is because of this worldwide coalition of governments targeting terrorism that there have been unexpected consequences for other movements and peoples without ties to Al Qaeda themselves. The countries that have joined this crusade have constituted themselves as a kind of private club. The list of priority terrorist targets changes with time. Each country has the right to propose its own targets, including its own internal adversaries. ETA saw itself inscribed on the list of movements of a worldwide threat for two reasons –in response to actions by Spain and France in influencing European Union policy, and as a result of their ill-advised ties by ETA and the IRA in aiding FARC in Colombia. This served to move ETA from the column of domestic nuisance in Spain to a movement of greater potential threat.

Among the groups who have embraced the armed struggle are ethnic minorities like the Basques, Corsicans, Kurds, Chechens, and Tamils who have a national identity and linguistic and cultural demands. Their long histories are also the histories of neglect and rejection of their demands by existing states. Violence comes to appear the best or last strategy for gaining leverage on the policy-making institutions of states.

The tragedy of this political choice is that it is the embrace of violence which serves to contaminate the cultural demands in these cases, and to marginalize more moderate ethnic elites. This is the case of the Basque movement, especially in Iparralde, where among the most visible leaders are those who reject violence on a personal level, but who often have refused to criticize the decision of others (read “ETA” or “Iparretarrak”) to use violence, themselves. This refusal has led the Spanish and French governments to interpret this refusal to condemn violence as a demonstration of support for the armed camp. This explains, in part, the action taken by France against Enbata in the 1970’s, and most recently the actions taken by France and Spain against Bata-suna and other political parties considered as spokesmen for ETA in the manner of the double face of the IRA and Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland.

The lessons of history are unforgiving: the embrace of violence as a tool by sub-national groups is most often doomed to defeat. In the history of the

twentieth century, the fate of most terrorist movements is an ignominious and often ignored end. Most are small movements in numbers and die a quiet death. In most cases, it is not simply that violence represents a tactical dead end, but more importantly, it is a **strategic error** as the Red Army Faction in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy later admitted. It would be one thing if violence served only to discredit the movements who embrace it. But the danger of the armed struggle is that in the current world situation, violence serves to contaminate other cultural and linguistic goals, and thus to menace the crown jewels –the true treasure of a people that is their language and culture. Violence intervenes at an historical moment when minority languages and cultures are already targeted by the crushing logic of assimilation and uniformity which are bi-products of an inexorable process of globalization that is already underway. In these cases, the steamroller which is globalization can destroy indigenous cultures and traditions whose richness serves to define the diversity of the human space. We are lessened by their loss.

The challenge remains to define a unified strategy for saving what is essential to ethnic peoples –their language and the culture– as the inheritance of subsequent generations. Basque autonomy will happen in the context of an inevitable European federalism or it won't happen at all. But the worst would be to witness the contamination of the cultural essence of a people by the ill-advised choice of violence in this generation. It is to eat the seed corn of future generations to come.

I leave the question of the morality of violence to philosophers and theologians. I am a political scientist, and what concerns me is the efficacy of violence as a political tactic. In reality, violence has never served as an instrument of unification for the abertzale camp. Even worse, the use of violence has served to fracture the Basque movement. The protest marches against ETA's violence that the world has seen in the South clearly demonstrates that there is an internal dynamic of fragmentation in the heart of the Basque people which has been caused by ETA's violence. In the case where violence serves to distance the abertzale movement from the Basque people, it becomes counter-productive. In such circumstances, if it continues, one must ask if we are not seeing the descent of violence from a rational –if incorrect– strategy toward nihilism. In the view of the nihilists (a word which shares the same root as the verb “to annihilate”, a reasoned political strategy is replaced by the skeptical belief that nothing has value, and that everything should be destroyed. In contrast with younger and more idealistic movements in their ideological development, for the nihilist, violence becomes the goal of political action, not a tool but now an end in and of itself. Thus the movement becomes seduced by what the nineteenth century anarchists called “the propaganda of the deed”.

This is why in the war against terrorism, the cultural consequences are more important than ever before. In an epoch when the success of violence is now cast in doubt, it remains for the people to make their wishes known. As Renan put it, the nation is a daily plebescite. With the worldwide decline

of minority languages, well-meaning people can no longer afford the luxury of silence faced with the survival of their culture. For the Spanish government, they must demonstrate the political courage to legitimate moderate elites and make concessions that will not only undercut the violent minority, but also prevent the rise of a new generation with grievances born of today's policy errors.

The most enigmatic of Chinese curses says, "May you live in interesting times". This is certainly the era in which we live today. Our future is an uncertain one. Terrorism, globalization, and the disappearance of cultural patrimonies are all signs of our age. They are the markers of a process of inevitable political and cultural change. Faced with the future which they represent, they oblige us to make realistic decisions about terrorism and political violence, or else to accept the consequences of the error of our ways.

The text of this article was written and under editorial review by RIEV at the time the Madrid train bombings took place in March, 2004, and for that reason they are not discussed in this article.