# TERRORISM IN THE SOUTHERN CONE:
## "Prosfictional" View and Power Politics[1]

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### SUBJECT AND APPROACH

Terrorism in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay) cannot adequately be explained without situating it in its particular political, social and economic contexts and without a comprehensive understanding of the ideology/discourse of the terrorist groups that could guide analysis of the role of violence in them. This paper addresses the dichotomy of terrorists' strategic goals and the threat they pose in the region expressed in two general patterns. The first pattern is primarily **oppositional (or conspiratorial)**, aimed at the overthrow of dictatorial regimes, where terrorism presents itself as a tactic embedded in strategies for either change or continuity, and is practised by governments and revolutionaries alike. Lumped together as urban guerrilla, oppositional terrorism provoked massive government reactions in "dirty wars" using repressive military strategies that resulted in thousands of deaths and disappearances This first pattern of terrorism is associated with the [limited and incomplete] transition from pre-modern to modern regional socioeconomic structure and the inadequacy of mechanisms for political transition.

The second pattern of terrorism, ultimately **strategic**, lies in the current period of rapid and tumultuous change, challenging the legitimacy of the state on grounds of perceived fundamental structural injustices in an era that promised to herald the end of local ideologies and the beginning of global post-liberal democracies. Terrorism under this second pattern becomes a tactical tool - empowered by drug trafficking and organized crime - in a (pseudo) struggle for social and political justice, the transformation of politics and society, in keeping with the legacy of radicalism (political, religious, etc.). Both oppositional and conspiratorial terrorism become primarily an urban phenomenon, conceptually engendered and politically sustained by students and intellectuals, with logistical (including financial) support from illegal activities.

Both patterns are diffused in recurrent cycles of social turmoil associated with economic failures to sustain developmental and security needs, judged to be the inevitable result of inequities inherent in global capitalism and liberalism. Faith in the efficacy of violence and the willingness to assume risks, rather than tactical differences in the use of force, converges the two patterns; however, the power of ideology in the latter pattern appears to be weaker than it was among the former.

These concepts will be expanded throughout the text, providing a working definition of the manifestations of terrorism in the Southern Cone based on its strategic objectives – which define its nature – and the ideologies that sustain them. In identifying these two patterns and the difference between them, the aim is to offer some ideas that may assist in the formulation of policies aimed at preventing/containing strategic terrorism in the region. In this connection, this article attempts to go beyond the common wisdom offered by forecasting and prospective analysis[2] concerning the manifestations of this phenomenon in the region, to explore the political developments that a "prosfictional" view[3] can provide in the correlation between the nature of the problem and the alternative responses that can be offered against it.[4]

The intent is to identify veins in an amalgam representative of the emerging environment (economic, political, military, and, perhaps most important, cognitive) in the Southern Cone; veins that only emerge under a broader perspective that "desensitizes" national specificities (to the point of making them irrelevant for analytical purposes). In this sense, the analytical focus used opposes an impartial view of some conclusions repeatedly encountered on the subject in the region, which practically speaking form a "politically correct" posture against the USA. Meantime, without taking on a pro-USA posture, this paper intentionally avoids making any ethical judgment of American policy or of terror/terrorism, or national attitudes, to point out the impacts of (current and anticipated) American policies in the region. The conclusions offered must therefore be considered from the standpoint of their usefulness in providing an alternative reference for the formulation of policies that prevent/contain the emergence of strategic terrorism in the region.

The purpose of the investigation is to explore the nature of the relational nexus between terrorism and the ideological sources that legitimize it. To meet this requirement, the analytical effort was structured so as to seek answers to four questions: (1) What are the strategic objectives of terrorism? (2) What is the ideology that defines and guides the achievement of these objectives? (3) What is the threat posed by the achievement of these objectives? and (4) What are the proposed responses to this threat?

The research for this paper was carried out between October 2004 and July 2005, with field research in various countries, interviews and documentation gathering. It should be noted, for purposes of academic rigor, that the interviews were only possible through a promise of confidentiality to the sources. It is therefore acknowledged that the results are not source-verifiable. On the other hand, it should be noted that after completion of the first draft, the conclusions were submitted to other people (most of them experts on the subject) and it appears that they are in keeping with their own observations and conclusions.

The presentation of the results of this research is structured in four sections. The first sectionpresents a summary of the common delineating aspects of oppositional terrorism manifest in the Southern Cone and of strategic terrorism as a potential threat. The second section attempts to identify aspects of the situations in which strategic terrorism has the potential of emerging, closing with some exploratory conclusions. The third then sets a framework of analysis to contain the current perceptions of terrorism in the region and develops some considerations on the intellectual, cultural, and cognitive aspects of possible "new militants". While the first section of the work is based on research of the literature, the second mainly

invo lves interviews and discussions with other academics and students of the subject. This section entails a change in form in order to explain the process of constructing the arguments. The last section reviews the differences between the two different patterns of terrorism in order to expose the nature of the relational nexus between the manifestations of terrorism in the Southern Cone. Throughout the entire text, but principally in the third section, the logic of offensive realism according to Measheimer[5] is used as a theoretical framework, along with the counterpoint developed by Nye concerning "Soft Power"; but without a generalizing merger of the two theoretical constructs. Both are implicitly and indiscriminately used throughout the paper, without further specific references.

## APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

For the extremist revolutionaries (chiefly Soviet-inspired) of Latin America, the Cuban Revolution called attention to the possibility of civilian "amateurs" overthrowing professional soldiers in a short period of time using guerrilla techniques. Typically, rural guerrilla warfare was carried out by middle-class youths, mostly students, frustrated with their potential for social ascent, initially, and erratically, supported by Cuba through the then-named *Dirección General de Inteligencia* [General Intelligence Directorate] or DGI. In the mid-1960s, there were more than 40 guerrilla training camps in Cuba, graduating more than 5,000 "combatants" per year.

The idea behind this movement was the transformation of the concept of guerrilla action from an instrument of attrition – a tactic within a strategy of action – to an instrument of decision, capable of overthrowing the enemy – a strategy in itself. Associated with this conceptual transformation was the change in the notion that this guerrilla strategy, unlike guerrilla tactics, no longer needed to await the right time to be used. It would create its own potential, thereby providing the opportunity for the revolutionary movement to gain critical mass (from the countryside, in the direction of the urban centres).

Under the influence of intellectual Regis Debray,[6] Latin American guerrilla movements distanced themselves from Soviet theory, advocating three basic points: (1) the political spearhead of revolution would not need to be the communist party; (2) guerrilla warfare was going to create the communist party, and not vice versa; (3) the political and military leadership of the revolutionary movement should be controlled by the guerrilla movement. In a way, the combination of these points led to the notion that the guerrilla movement should run and control its own political party.

Note that our considering terrorism as a tactic of the guerrilla strategy practised during that historical period puts into perspective the instrumental function of terrorism in creating the conditions for the emergence of a revolution (political, socioeconomic and social) – whence the designation "conspiratorial terrorism"; different from what we observe in present-day global terrorism, which is moving away from the notion of a strategy of action aimed at another revolution, and approaching the notion of being a war in and of itself. In other words, while the manifestation of terrorism in the 1960s was a tactical action used to achieve a political objective, today's global terrorism seeks to define the political environment, whence the designation "strategic terrorism".

Note, however, that the USA in its global war[7] against terrorism is facing a policy of terror and not just a terrorist tactic, in a conflict polarized by ideologically determined interests.[8] It should therefore be understood that Al Qaeda is making policy – a policy of violence[9]. The formulation of the USA's policies and strategies towards Latin America highlights the fundamental distinction that in the perspective of Latin America – and not that of the USA – the possibility of the re-emergence of terrorism in Latin America is still viewed as the possibility of the (re)emergence of a tactic of action as part of a revolutionary movement. Since, however, there is no longer a political space – or even intellectual environment – for such an emergence, the possibility of the emergence of terrorism in the perspective of Latin America simply does not exist. It is viewed as an American invention![10]

The old guerrilla militants, actually former terrorists, are now in power. For example, look at Deputy José Genoíno, former chairman of the Workers' Party, the Party in Power in Brazil. The same thing is happening in Uruguay. So the tactical guerrilla action practised by the guerrilla movements is simply losing its relationship to reality. The proof is that the populations of the countries of the Southern Cone were apparently disillusioned with guerrilla groups as a revolutionary spearhead more than with the notion of revolution itself; in other words, disillusioned with violence as a method, not with the expectation of radical changes in a safe environment coupled with development processes.

The Latin American military forces were not prepared to face the challenge posed by the rural guerrilla warfare of the 60s and 70s because their force structures, mainly funded by the Mutual Defense Act signed with the USA, were still using strategies inherited from World War II, in a primarily defensive posture. This situation was aggravated by two factors.

The first involves professional military education, which emphasized geopolitical concepts in which conventional wars of attrition and control of maritime traffic defined strategies of action in hypotheses of regional wars. In this conception, structures based on quick-moving light infantry forces with extensive autonomy and highly aggressive rules of behaviour to combat guerrilla centres were relegated to second place, or even intellectually scorned.[11] The second factor, due to the USA's war in Vietnam, was the drain of the resources (equipment and training) necessary for implementing the traditional strategy of the Latin American armed forces, which led to the end of the Military Assistance Plan (MAP) initiated in 1961.[12] Moreover, these two factors provided opportunities for the guerrilla movement to advance in its purposes.

The guerrilla movements' conquest of spaces (political, intellectual, social, and mainly cognitive), along with the lack of political mechanisms for the transition of power and the weakness of the instrumental potential of the armed forces to oppose guerrilla tactics, led to the exacerbation of a situation of confrontation that ended up creating conditions for the unleashing of military coups with the support of Latin America's middle classes and national leaders.[13] Note that the coups were not engendered in the isolation of the barracks, but in the political environment where the barracks existed. Their development, however, took on other nuances over time.

The decade of the 1970s was marked by the takeover of power by the military forces in Latin America, with the virtual suppression of any free and constitutionally established political opposition. The forces of opposition migrated towards a militant left, with extremist expressions sustained by terrorist acts

supported by Cuba, while the military was supported by the United States.[14] Meanwhile, while the leftist revolutionary movements left *foquismo* (referring to the term *foco,* meaning torch and signifying the manner in which Fidel Castro and Che Guevara reportedly conducted the Cuban Revolution) behind to engage in urban terrorism, the military forces initiated an intense war of repression based on counterinsurgency techniques.

*Foquismo* called for the establishment of a "sanctuary" in remote, difficult to reach areas where training camps, clinics and arsenals for weapons repair and munitions preparation were established. Inspired by the Cuban rural guerrilla starting with Sierra Maestra, *foquismo* initially proved very efficient in providing lines of action for terror against groups of regular forces and armed forces installations. With the passage of time, these tactics began to prove ineffective, resulting in defeats in remote parts of Bolivia and Peru (in addition to other locations in Central America) and bringing about a gradual transition from folkism to urban guerrilla warfare (denoting a very rapid learning curve and the existence of highly developed mechanisms of information distribution). With this change in their strategy of action, the then-guerrilla movements literally took on the profile of terrorist groups, using terror as a tactic aimed at implementing strategies of action inspired by Carlos Mariguella's "Manual of Urban Guerrilla Warfare".

One of the reasons for this change lies in the change in the sources of financing for the activities of these groups, which with the "depletion" of supplies from Cuba (with the exception of training, some weapons, and ideological support) began to explore kidnapping and bank robberies as their major financing activities. This trend changes again when terror takes on the configuration of strategic terrorism, funding itself through organized crime in association with drug trafficking. Another reason was the virtual depletion of countries' capabilities of financing social programmes in the face of growing urbanization, and the attempt, directed and engendered by the states, to rapidly change from a raw-materials export structure to industrial production.

These two factors resulted in an enormous centralism in national policy-making in Latin America and in the states' production capabilities, creating conditions in which a coup d'état, when it emerged, could quickly gain effectiveness and capillarity in the control of the states' entire decision-making and production mechanism. While military takeovers through coups d'état are seen as a reaction (supported by the population) to violence, aimed at creating an environment of national security for the continuation (resumption) of development, they are made possible by the prior virtual failure of a more representative democratic process and a free economy.

In this process, the military forces were implicitly divided into two large groups. The first stayed on a professional trend associated with the countries' continuing participation in America's global Cold War strategy (and as appropriate structures of force, organization, equipment, and doctrine) in addition to concern with regional border disputes – the so-called regional war hypotheses, which, for example, had Argentina and Brazil in conflict until the mid-1980s.

Another group "specialized" in the war against terror, state terrorism, that came to be called the "dirty war". The setup of the elements necessary to implement strategies of action against terror had the advantage of the same elements that created the conditions that made coups d'état effective, quickly leading to the establishment of a highly centralized (and efficient) command, control and

intelligence structure that under coordinated command included police and military capabilities both for armed actions and for "preventive" actions in the strategy to repress terror, in which prisons holding "suspects" took the opportunity to commit enormous human rights violations under the aegis of the concept of national security.[15]

It is important to note that while war against terror would really assume a joint capability, the armed forces of the first group – those oriented towards conventional warfare – are strongly opposed to the integration of the forces, with the police separate from the military (subordinate to is the right word), and support a "joint" command and control structure equipped with (weak) mechanisms of cooperation under separate commands.

This development reveals one of the major current problems of the fight against terrorism, and expresses its possibilities for solution. During the end of the dirty war in the process of the democratic recovery of states, with the natural disarticulation of integrated terror-fighting capabilities, the articulating logic of conventional warfare took back its dominance in armed forces design. Although adapted, this logic is proving inadequate to face the so-called new threats, which are superimposed on the traditional threats that have continued to be the job of the armed forces.

Although there has been some effort to modernize assets (limited by scarce funding under political pressure), only a new design of the armed forces could respond to the integration demands posed by strategic terrorism, which necessarily requires a reformulation of doctrine and command, control, communications, intelligence, and computational (C4I) structures, supported by a reform of the system of professional military instruction. In other words, attempts to "fix" the armed forces and integrate jurisdictions of other institutions (mainly police) to confront strategic terrorism are faced with a historical legacy that opposes the acquisition of new jurisdictions.

The immediate conclusion is that demands for transformation in the sense of the concept developed by the armed forces of the USA make no sense to the Latin American armed forces, encountering a cultural resistance that sees in this movement the risk of losing their historical function, associated with the risk of the possible resumption of the duties involved in the "dirty war", for which the military forces are no better prepared than before.


**Analytical Patterns and Performance Indexes: Historical Evolution**

Based on this data a better comprehension can be obtained of the articulation between the evolution of the perception of the threat of terrorism and the evolution of the performance indexes used to gauge the efficiency of the actions of this threat. These stages can be summarized in the following terms[16]:

–  In the 1960s, the analytical effort was aimed at defining patterns of terrorist attacks, and the predominantly descriptive research was based on case studies. Its purpose was primarily to identify effective defences against terror, leading to the construction of performance indexes associated with the number of occurrences/decrease in trends of certain types of terrorist actions, since

governments implicitly decided to defend certain specific targets against terrorist action.

– In the 1970s, with the intensification of violence, the efforts migrated from the types of attacks to the typology of the groups that perpetrated them, so the effectiveness of counter-terrorist strategies came to be gauged in terms of the number of terrorists caught and of actions of specific groups neutralized before they could effectively be unleashed, continuing the reactive strategies of the 60s. These were aimed at breaking up the typical structure then used by terrorists – cells – that limited the damage resulting from the capture of any of their members, while reducing the ability of intelligence services to get to the cells to trace their communications.

– In the 80s, with the start of the processes of democratization, analytical efforts were centered on analyzing the effectiveness of government policies (and less that of operational actions) against the ability of terrorist groups to articulate an effective ideological discourse for new recruiting purposes. Analysis became mainly inferential, with performance indexes aimed at measuring the ability to neutralize actions in specific categories, and with the operational counter-terrorist actions aimed at neutralizing the leaders of the terrorist organizations in those categories. This reflects the start of a change from a reactive to a more proactive posture.

– With the end of the East-West conflict, the analytical focus was no longer centered on the leaders but on the behavioural patterns of the still-active terrorist groups, aimed at destroying their operational capabilities. This change emphasized the need to neutralize support structures (since the leadership had practically been neutralized). This period marks the start of a greater concern with the sources of financing of terror, emphasizing proactive strategies but now aimed more at preventing terrorism than fighting it, and dealing with the signs that terror would be gaining a multinational dimension driven by information distribution mechanisms.

– The current analytical effort expands the concern with the sources of financing from specific groups for terrorist networks and their articulated financing structures; the analysis of the relationships between the nodes of the networks associated with the emergence of new ideological patterns (this paper is based on this pattern), with the performance indexes associated with the ability to prevent actions that give terror visibility and the emergence of new manifestations. Current strategic postures are aimed at longer-term proactivity since the globalization of terror reduces the importance of the spatial dimension. While the strategies of action in this method tend to increase the degree of uncertainty of terror planning, they force the "specialization of terror", with a more careful selection of targets, exploring the possibility of achieving repeated (sometimes simultaneous) successes within very short periods through more complex attacks before the opposition forces correct their operational failings. At the same time, this creates greater vulnerability for strategic terrorism: dependence on communications for the efficient operation of terrorist networks.

These patterns, taken in combination, leave the impression that mere statements of intent, policy declarations, and even international agreements do not appear to have produced any significant impact on the reduction of terrorist actions. Terrorist actions only appear to decrease with targeted pragmatic actions, and appeared to increase with the increase in the media coverage they received.

**"ACTIVE" TERRORISM IN THE SOUTHERN CONE**

Before any analysis, it is important to contrast the manifestation of terrorism in Latin America, and more specifically in the Southern Cone, with the rest of the world. In the period from 1961 to 2003, 244 terrorist incidents of significant importance were counted,[17] of these, only 3 occurred in the Southern Cone: the attack by the Hizballah Group against the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1994, the kidnapping of the US Ambassador in Brazil by the MR-8 Group in 1969, and the kidnapping and subsequent death of police officer Dan Mitrione in Uruguay in 1970.

Figures 1 and 2 below show these data. Obviously, based on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion of events as terrorist manifestations (or the result of the non-convergence of the definitions used), we have changes in the listings in the data bases. However, even with some minimal variations, either in absolute or relative terms (which is what this intends to show), the indexes of these manifestations are still low. It is important to keep this ratio in perspective throughout the analysis of the evolving trajectory in the Southern Cone, since it will support the conclusions on the typology of the threat of "active" terrorism offered at the end of the section.

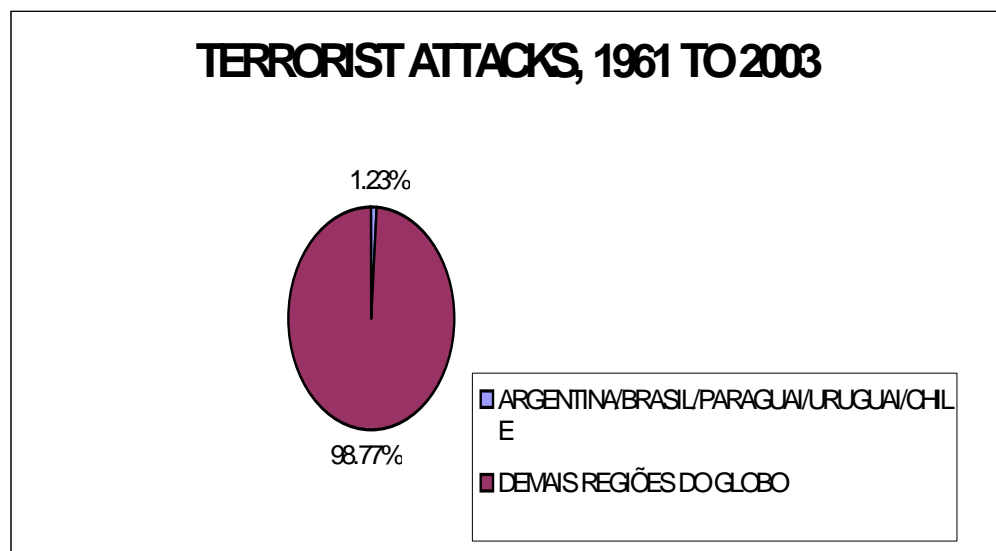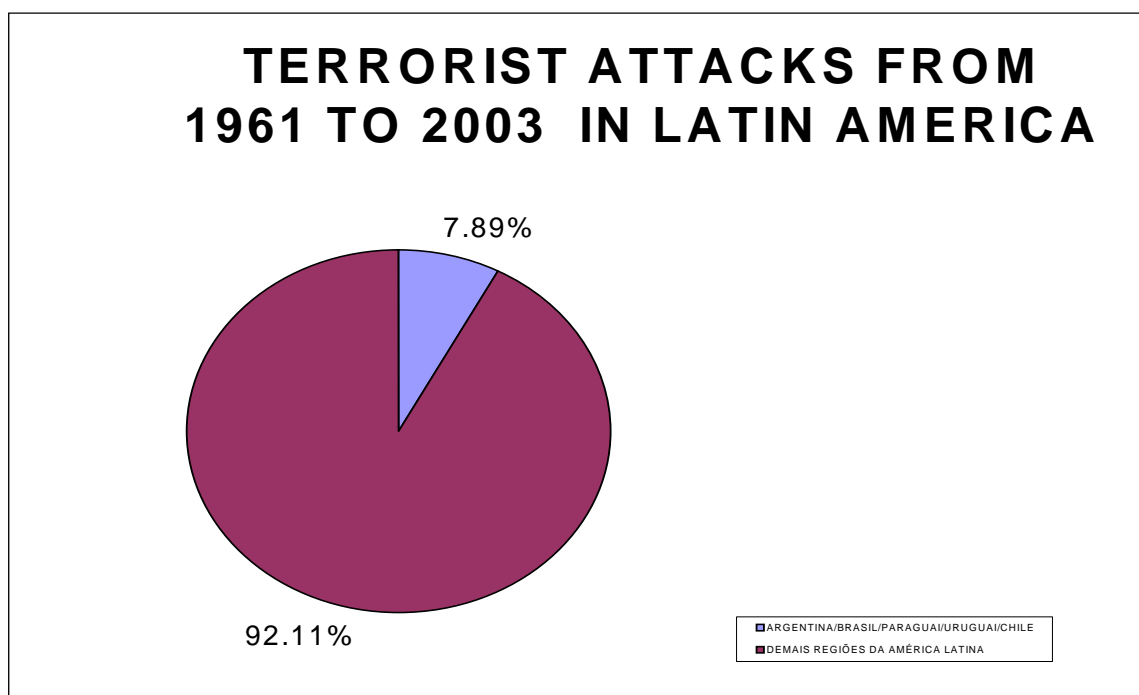**Figure 1 Global Terrorism vs. Terrorism in the Southern Cone**

**Figure 2 Terrorism in Latin America vs. Terrorism in the Southern Cone**

## TERRORIST ATTACKS FROM 1961 TO 2003 IN LATIN AMERICA

7.89%

92.11%

☐ ARGENTINA/BRASIL/PARAGUAI/URUGUAI/CHILE
■ DEMAIS REGIÕES DA AMÉRICA LATINA

Uruguay is considered the cradle of urban guerrilla warfare (in reality, the first to migrate from rural guerrilla, initially located near the northern border with Brazil, to urban guerrilla centered in Montevideo), with its roots in 1963 and Raul Sendic, founder of the National Liberation Movement (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional or MLN). Its members, intellectuals and leaders of operations and rural movements, were called the Tupamaros; an evocation of the symbolic image of the Incan leader Tupac Amaru II in his (unsuccessful) fight against the Spanish invaders, for their fight aimed at overthrowing the government.

The violence and intensity of the attacks routinely carried out by the Tupamaros against the police and armed forces led military and police personnel to dress in civilian clothing and attempt to "hide out", like the terrorists, in the very society they were supposed to be protecting. This ended up mixing purposes (reaction of the targets of the terror) and environment, with the result that in 1971 the Tupamaros suffered two major defeats: one at the ballot box, when the population cast a small percentage of the votes for the Partido da Frente Ampla that was supporting them, and another in their own midst with the failure of the effort to expand their operations throughout the country. This second defeat, it is important to note, occurred due to the markedly urban style (mannerisms, language, culture) the terror assumed, with its members losing their identification with the rural population, who treated them like foreigners and refused to provide shelter.

Encouraged by this, the Uruguayan armed forces and police – supported and trained by Brazil and the United States – unleashed an offensive against the leadership of the Tupamaros and ended up destructuring their articulation

capability and leading most of the few survivors to migrate to Argentina and Brazil, to plunge into anonymity, or both.[18]

The plunge of the Peruvian terrorists of the "conspiratorial" era into anonymity is likewise associated (much more obviously) with the imprisonment of Abimael Guzmán, intellectual leader of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, SL),[19] a movement that clearly originated in the university environment associated in partnership with union and rural leaders. The Shining Path continues, however, to be an extremely violent armed group operating from bases located in remote regions of Peru, where they also maintain coca farming areas. US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) reports indicate that the group collects "revolutionary taxes" from the region's coca producers.

In retrospect, the decision not to use foreign forces in the fight against the Tupamaro terrorism was the right one. That alternative was considered as a sort of "regional peacekeeping mission" since the Uruguayan armed forces and police were at one time practically hostages of the Tupamaros, who even had control of certain urban areas of Montevideo.
Among other reasons, that option was discarded in the face of the possibility that such a "peacekeeping mission" could certainly provoke a terror integration movement in the Southern Cone, encouraging the spread of terrorist purposes among the countries of the region against a "foreign" intervention. In that sense, compartmenting the manifestations of conspiratorial terrorism in their own national space, where they had their origin and their ideological and material support, ended up being a factor that contributed to their neutralization (the term defeat would be incorrect). This same analysis is valid for the other countries of the Southern Cone, since they present the same profile.

There is abundant evidence that conspiratorial terrorism in the Southern Cone is inactive. In Paraguay, the violence of counter-terrorist action and the immense force (operational and political) of the intelligence services practically eradicated the organized groups. Until 2002, the intelligence service of Paraguay had practically the same structure – and the same members – that fought the dirty war. Unlike the other countries of the Southern Cone, the military forces have considerable political force. The Tupamaros are practically neutralized, as are the members of Brazilian terrorist groups.[20]

Information gathered during the research showed that their cells are not dormant, they were simply broken up, with the members going into political militancy (weak, it's true) in legally recognized political parties. Their presence, mainly in the southeastern region of Brazil, still recurs in public universities. However, they are engaged there more for lectures and seminars explaining the past than to present future proposals (although some openly maintain support for the communist revolution, with Leninist and Maoist characteristics).

The sole exception, but even so with very subtle manifestation, is in Peru, where the Shining Path's capabilities of articulation are still perceived as potentially dangerous, even without the charismatic Guzmán. The unequivocal fact is that conspiratorial terrorism as such does not represent a current threat. Its ideology has become out of touch with the political reality of the countries of the region, as its strategic objectives in fact ended up being achieved: the dominant ideology is leftist, although the government's practices are pragmatically subordinated to the need for integration in the free economy led by the USA.

The dormant risk is the rupture of the process of democratic transition, with the resulting imbalance of the tenuous forces that are inertializing the activation of the dormant conspiratorial terror structures in support of strategic terrorism and the recovery of power, but now based on an ideology associated with widespread longings for better social conditions associated with an economic structure with a broader distribution of opportunities and advantages. It is only in this sense that there is a perception of a possible association of the manifestations present in other regions of the world, of active strategic terrorism under religious extremism based on very specific interpretations of doctrines of faith. And in a "prosfictional" view, this association is potentially foreseeable due to the conditions offered in some areas of the region.

The geographic triangle of the Triple Border, defined by Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), Foz de Iguacú (Brazil), and Porto Iguaçú (Argentina) is recognized as a refuge for Islamic extremists from two terrorist organizations: Hizballah and the Islamic Resistance Movement known as Hamas. This situation reflects the relative ease with which terrorist organizations can infiltrate and remain reasonably out of sight for a long period of time.

In addition, there is evidence that a substantial proportion of the financial resources generated in the region is illegal, manipulated by the Chinese Mafia, which exacts $8,000 "insurance" for each container that enters the region and $30,000 for each transaction. Furthermore, there is a sophisticated "industry" of counterfeiting paper money (from all over the world) and credit card "cloning" in the Triple Border region, mainly dominated by Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians, who foster money laundering and, more importantly, a new – and very ingenious – form of financing terrorist activities: cloned credit cards are used to draw small amounts from various accounts and immediately destroyed, leaving no trace of the transaction. The funds are then transported by "messengers",[21] along with other funds garnered from the religious financing circuit fuelled by draining donations made to the mosques and religious centres by the large population of Arab origin.

The circuit is fed by legal and legitimately donated funds from the region's population of Arab origin to support humanitarian agencies, primarily in Iran and Lebanon. There is no evidence that some of the funds are diverted to finance terror along their route from the donors in Brazil to the users in the Middle East, or how, where, or by whom it is done. But there are strong indicators that the agencies receiving funds are associated with terrorist activities. For example, the "Prophet Mohammed" Shiite Mosque is led by religious leader Mohamad Hussein Fadllah, who has links to Hizballah, while the "House of Prayers" Sunni Mosque is associated with the Hamas group through the "Wahhabi" sect led by Sheik Atik Al Din Al Athari.[22] The Benificent Islamic Cultural Centre in Foz do Iguaçú, where the "Omar Ben Al Khattab" Mosque operates, also has evidence of links with Hamas.

At this time, strategic terrorism has only an outpost for gathering finance and personnel in the Southern Cone. The fact is that although strategic terrorism represents a reasonably homogeneous whole throughout the world, it is not yet operationally manifest (with explicit acts of violence) in the Southern Cone[23]. Nevertheless, given the conditions stated above, if strategic terrorism emerges in the region, although the "theatres of operations" may be in the urban centres, its logistic, social and ideological support will certainly not be there but on the borders, mainly those between Brazil and Paraguay, or Uruguay and Bolivia.

A geo-strategic analysis of the Southern Cone shows that in these regions – unlike the geographic environment of the borders of Chile and Peru – there is a highway development and integration structure that creates the conditions for the flow of low-cost products and services, an abundance of arable land nearby and accessible consumer centres, and a sophisticated banking structure – providing the cash flow to local businesses – linked to the global financial flow structure.

Throughout the past 40 years, these conditions, without – or rather, in spite of state intervention – have developed in these border areas into a movement of transiency and social and economic amalgamation that presents the same profile as other regions of the globe where strategic terrorism has already taken root. These environments are marked by a "dilution" of ethnicities, nationalities and cultures in a restricted geographic space, normally associated with low development indexes, limited possibilities of social ascent, and deficient mechanisms for the accommodation of interests that end up driving the emergence of social dissatisfaction in populations practically living in a vacuum of effective political power. These populations in no way differ from the "brasilguaios" (Brazil + Paraguay), "bolibrários" (Brazil + Bolivia), and "urubráios" (Brazil + Uruguay). In all, there is an estimated population of more than 3 million able-bodied people in these groups.

This situation, since it is certainly not an unknown factor, at least not in the region, should not be over-emphasized. But the existence of mechanisms to develop strategic terrorism in the region *is*, and the American policies for the region appear to explicitly disregard this explosive situation.

This criterion expands the problematic of prevention/containment of strategic terrorism in the Triple Border region. In other words, the potential problem is more serious or bigger than in the region as a whole, and less and more specific in the Triple Border area, as it is only an early aggravation of an anticipated problem.

Table 1 shows elements of the economic-social configuration of the Triple Borders region, in an attempt to show that the region is a primarily economic pole, based on international trade – almost a small-scale regional Miami. In addition, it should be noted that the notion of the Triple Border as a isolated area lost in the midst of the Pantanal lowlands visited by terrorists is a mere fiction.

**Table 1- Three Borders: Financial Situation**

|  | Cidad del Este | Foz do Iguaçú | Porto Iguaçú |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 220,000 (17,000 foreigners) | 240,000 (large fluctuations, dominated by Brazilians from the southeast who come in to "stock up" on low-priced products) | 35,000 (fluctuates greatly; the city is a tourist centre) |

| Trade Structure and Movement (estimated) | U$15 billion per year with the movement of approximately 20,000 containers, the foundation for at least 72 industries employing more than 7,000 Paraguayans and supported by 22 banks, including 13 foreign banks | U$18 billion/year. These amounts are associated with the trade (mostly illegal) of products received and transferred from Ciudad del Este. About 5,000 small companies trading. | The city operates as a warehouse for bringing products received at Ciudad del Este into Argentina. |
|---|---|---|---|

These data show the trade warehouse function the region has assumed, which is responsible for its economic survival. However, what they do not show[24] is the relationship between the volume of business and the funds drained from the region to finance strategic terrorism – estimated at about U$200,000 per month. This amount is substantial for financing terror.[25]

The figures in the table are not new. There are dozens of reports on them (not all of them agree), many circulating freely on the internet. The aspect to emphasize is that the amount is still a ridiculously small portion of the funds moved in trade (legal or illegal, but not directly linked to terror) in the economies of Brazil and Argentina. For Paraguay, however, the Triple Borders area is a vital source of funds, so any change in this situation substantially alters that country's fragile economic-social equilibrium. For that reason, a policy of preventing/combating terrorism by stopping the flow of these funds to Paraguay must be viewed with extreme care, since it could foster exactly what we want to exterminate: support for terrorism, which would change from limited financial support to unlimited popular support.

In this case it would be more effective to seek broad-spectrum policies (not merely in the area of defence) aimed at helping the countries of the region to establish more efficient political-financial mechanisms for the control and supervision of investment programmes and projects and direct trade. More importantly, the problem of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone is being treated primarily as a police problem. Those involved in the illegal financial circuit (whether or not linked to terrorism) are treated as outlaws. The police solution excludes any ideological judgment and needs no definition of terrorism for the formulation of criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of those involved in common crime, depriving them of the possibility of treating it as political crime.

Due to this policy option, and given the inadequate training of the police forces for the resulting strategies – much more sophisticated than those aimed at preventing and combating common crime – there is a growing movement towards re-equipping the police, including (re)creating departments specialized in preventing and combating terror. As would be expected, these new tasks are beyond their capabilities, operational patterns, and intelligence resources. For that reason, and due to the still significant presence and influence of military forces in maintaining national security,[26] it would be important to consider the possibility of investing in the modernization of the force design processes within an overall framework of modernization and transformation.

Of course, by induction, this defence reform would influence the adoption of the principles of management in state mechanisms. Frankly speaking, it would be using the reform of the armed forces as a driving factor and foundation for the reform of the state in the direction of greater and more effective control and presence in the financial actions in the Triple Border area. The door to this alternative appears to already be open with the installation of American forces in Paraguay within an agreed framework of cooperation. A long-term task, certainly a difficult one (possibly wrong), but much more acceptable than an intervention that alters the fragile regional economic equilibrium centered not only around the Triple Borders but also throughout all the centres of potential tensions in the border areas of the Southern Cone.

## Some Exploratory Conclusions

The evidence presented above makes it possible to conclude that the principal terrorist activities in the Southern Cone are directly related not to the local societies, but to a deep-seated network of organized crime and international terrorism, and the region is being used as a centre of support and fund-raising to finance these activities. Although in the past the revolutionary movements had the support of the national population of the countries where they were operating, and were deeply linked with the lives of the people and with those countries' insertion in the world economy and politics, and were essentially a specific phenomenon but with important similarities to other groups from other areas, the terrorism now present in the region is not representative of that region. Although the old groups represented local society, or claimed to represent it, with its consent and support the terrorism now present in the region is marginal and represents other communities, particularly the Chinese mafia and Islamic extremist groups operating worldwide.

This distinction is of fundamental importance in understanding these processes and combating these activities. In the same way as this region is used for these criminal purposes, other regions of the world could be – and probably have been for some time. Combating this type of financing is combating improper transfers of funds and the counterfeiting of paper money and credit cards, contraband goods, international drug and weapons trafficking, and corruption. But this means combating organized crime, involving efforts by local police, and not specifically counter-terrorist activities.

The links between the terrorist groups operating in the Southern Cone, when perceived, are of short duration, normally aimed at specific operational situations with no connotation of merging objectives or ideologies. On the other hand, the research for this paper did not identify a coordinated regional strategy for combating terror (of the collective security/defence type) deliberately aimed at compartmenting – isolating – the terrorist manifestations of each country within its own space. In other words, no policy orchestration against terror at the regional level is evident; each country has been developing its own strategies in isolation in keeping with the particular characteristics of the violence they have faced.

This does not mean that there has not been intense intelligence sharing and exchanges of material support and instruction among the forces acting against terror (mainly informal). The USA has clearly played an instrumental role in the supply of intelligence, equipment, and training (the now sadly-remembered School

of the Americas, associated in the minds of many in the region with the training of Latin American military forces in the practice of torture).

This appraisal gains relevance with the media reports of a recent decision to station American troops in Paraguay – reports that are denied by both the US government and Paraguay and are clearly inaccurate. This does not exclude cooperation in training, equipment and intelligence against the "new threats" associated with Paraguay's legitimate interest in seeing in these forces a source of regional development.

The anticipated developments derive from the fact that the American and Paraguayan rationales behind this decision are different, planting the seeds for enormous future problems and conflicts. While the installation of American capabilities in the Southern Cone is being carried out relatively "discreetly", mainly because the current political situation is dominated by other more immediate topics – led by the political crisis in Brazil, conflicts in the Mercosul, etc. – this construction is obviously very poorly built politically, creating resistance to the construction of operational mechanisms that make it possible to integrate American forces in the national terror control efforts along with the other countries of the region.

This notion makes more sense with the understanding that peace and violence have been fluctuating cyclically throughout the history of the countries of the Southern Cone, and more affected by economic than ideological crises. When governments abuse their mandate, the population supports the guerrillas, and when they prove incapable of advancing the desires of the population the population supports the return to order by the armed forces. If these structural conditions are not changed, there are no convincing arguments against potential "ideological recruitment" for strategic terrorism, regardless of the success or failure of strategies or tactics for combating terror. In the Southern Cone, the issue of preventing strategic terrorism is not military or ideological, it is economic-political-social.

It is very much as a result of this perception that in various intellectual forums in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile,[27] the future of the American presence in Paraguay is seen in a negative light, although all acknowledge that not much can be done in the face of American power and determination. This concern is not completely groundless. It is not at all inconceivable that dormant conspiratorial terrorism capabilities might be incorporated in strategic terrorism, supported by organized crime in association with drug trafficking.

This would certainly be the worst possible scenario for the USA and for the region. Although the American presence makes sense – for the Americans – from the standpoint of defence against strategic terror, it is highly problematic, if not wrong, from the political standpoint because it reveals an enormous misunderstanding of the regional characteristics (particularly cultural aspects and national strategic architectures) that simultaneously foster and neutralize the emergence of strategic terror in the region.


**"IDEOLOGICAL RECRUITING"**

The study of the factors that lead to engaging in the practice of terrorist violence finds at least three explanatory trends.[28] The first is related to psycho-social

factors, as described by Laqueur and Bion,[29] with two mutually complementary approaches: one viewing manifestations of violence as under the influence of psychotic conditioners; and the other viewing them as induced by the individual's social group dynamic (including the family environment and the closest circle of acquaintances).[30] Post does a good job of capturing the second approach in affirming that "the internalization of a group logic in an individual occurs when he submerges his own identity in that of a group, subordinating individual morals to a group dynamic".[31]

The second trend is also related to socio-political factors, as described by Crenshaw.[32] While Sprinzak calls this trend psycho-political,[33] the distinction is more semantic than substantive because both see the entrance into terrorist militancy as the result of a rational calculation (whether or not by a mind with a propensity to violence) by a person who elects to practise terror because he perceives violence as the only possible alternative for the achievement of his political objectives.

The third trend, although highly controversial and lacking sufficient empirical corroboration, is associated with the emergence of a new cognitive-social revolution of a global nature. This revolution, immersed in the still-confused movement to accommodate new social patterns to globalization and in the emergence of new cognitive patterns under the pressures of the information age, would reconfigure the notion of terror, making it an ideology in itself (and no longer the instrument of an ideology). It would be a revolution of a magnitude similar to the Copernican, the French, or the industrial revolution. According to this trend, the violence used by terror could only be judged by moral principles developed under the aegis of that revolution, allowing religious radicalism (extremism) to uphold its actions as politically correct according to this ethic. If this trend gains any sustenance, terrorism will cease to be a dysfunctional pattern manifest in the environment and become the principal defining force of its own environment, drastically altering not only the notion of terrorism but also making the forms now used to fight it ineffective.

The second trend is the one most widely professed at this time, incorporating the first as a factor to explain psychological patterns shaped in the environment that defines it. Although there are differences concerning the mechanisms of installation of the pathology (one professing a psychological source with social manifestation and the other a social source with psychological manifestation), the two versions explaining the first trend converge in viewing the propensity towards violence as a sort of "relief valve" for a violent personality, with terrorism supplying the stimuli and the environment.

The adoption of the second trend (with the first incorporated in it) as the referential context for this paper makes it possible to understand the motivations for engaging in terrorist acts as an ideological as well as an intellectual manifestation, since the terrorism phenomenon takes on a symbolic connotation based on subjective conditions.[34] In this trend, the group leaders gain relevance in the process of building the perception of the need (ideological justification) and validity (intellectual justification) of the use of violence as a political instrument, normally codified by the ideology the group professes.

While conspiratorial terrorism, in its tactical instrumental function associated with urban guerrilla, has at its core university students and professors (who were those with the best access to information – keeping in mind that at that time, without the

internet, knowledge was normally spread locally, by personal communications, the practitioners of strategic terrorism take on another, more "specialized" profile, since they must handle much more sophisticated operational demands in order to contrive their actions through the enormous obstacle imposed by repressive mechanisms.

Around this intellectual militant core of conspiratorial terrorism are groups of militants from the poor working class and middle class, mainly university students. While this core is not monolithic, the convergence of the interests of its components barely makes it possible to recognize any differentiating aims. So the operational militant groups, unlike the intellectual core, have relatively differentiated characteristics (patterns of action), from common banditry, far from the intellectual core, to the sophisticated practice of psychological warfare, with sophisticated exploration of the media, closer to the core.

This dispersion generates two mutually complementary effects. On the one hand, the dispersion of terrorist actions shows (as was their primary objective) the inadequacy of the forces combating them to ensure individual and collective security. On the other hand, the dispersion of the militant groups' purposes and operational actions increases the scope of responsibility of the armed forces, with the corresponding need for those forces to specialize and increase their military actions against terrorism, creating a mechanism that strengthens the growing autonomy of the armed forces in defining their own tasks, making them increasingly more autonomous with respect to the political supervision of their actions.

In this environment, businessmen, since they were not the priority target of the psychological warfare unleashed by terrorism (the target was the masses who would come in to strengthen their contingents), saw it as easier, simpler and safer to accommodate to banditry, giving in to the demands for logistical support for which they paid the price in order to be left in peace. Interviews with businessmen[35] revealed that it was not a question of fear of violence that led them to collaborate with terrorism, since they had (and still have) sophisticated and efficient protection by private security agents, but much more a cost-benefit calculation – with the situation of incapability of the armed forces, the cost of paying for terror was less than the cost of the potential property damage.

In spite of the obvious "specialization" of strategic terrorism, it still finds its principal potential source of both intellectual capabilities and future militants in the university environment of Latin America. Therefore, acknowledging strategic terrorism's limitations in mobilizing and organizing the masses, investigating how university people and the entrepreneurial class position themselves in the face of the demands of strategic terrorism is particularly relevant when one considers that conspiratorial terrorism in the Southern Cone prefers to recruit among specific groups (university students and business leaders) instead of recruiting in society in general, which would increase their exposure and vulnerability.

It must be acknowledged that the environment in which terrorism manifests itself has undergone a profound change. While the period of conspiratorial terrorism was marked by the bi-polarity of the Cold War, strategic terrorism emerges in the unipolarity dominated by the USA. Even at the risk of oversimplification, the magnitude of America's current power makes it possible to analyze the profile of the new terrorist militants just by considering the impact of the perception of American policies on the definition of this new environment.

It is one thing, however, to analyze what the Americans say, and another to analyze what they think; and even more difficult to analyze what the Latin Americans say and think about the Americans. While the Americans' version of themselves (try as their detractors might to deny it) exhibits an overall coherence between their political actions and declared policies (coherence does not mean agreement, it is important to note), Latin America's version of the Americans is full of contradictions and (try as its defenders might to deny it) imperfections (contradiction does not mean incorrectness, but in some cases only an inadequate explanation of cause-and-effect relationships).

This paper attempts to show the second, and more difficult, perception, to isolate and present to the USA a view from the outside looking in. To that end, a frame of reference is developed below that isolates two well-marked analytical poles: the view called extremist conspirationist and the view called pragmatic idealism. These two views are deliberately built on exaggerated perceptions in order to clearly mark the analytical distinctions between current perceptions of the United States in Latin America. The perception of the role of the United States in the War against Terror is therefore assumed as a variable in the choice of ideological engagement present in the Southern Cone.[36]

## FRAME OF ANALYSIS: TWO POLAR VIEWS

The frame of analysis was primarily shaped based on interviews with opinion-forming intellectuals and political and economic leaders, as well as former terrorists and also businessmen who were under pressure from terrorist groups to give them support and/or shelter.

### Radical Conspirationists

In Latin America, manifestations of America's posture against terror that fall into the conspirationist view interpret historical facts and identify a sophisticated fabric of cause-and-effect relationships that would explain the extremist and conservative postures manifest in actions deliberately engendered by American leaders to ensure and give continuity to their national interests. This view presupposes an instrumental rationale in American foreign policy.

The re-engineering of history developed by the exaggerated posture of the conspirationist view would sustain a prediction of trends that would justify the need for American intervention (including military) based on the allegation that the population in general (including American) with its short-term vision is not capable of realizing in time the threats already forming against the national security of the USA that would threaten the interests of the free American economy, and the "American way of life" itself. For that reason, American foreign policy should take on an aggressive militant posture in order to guarantee the very survival of the American state, since its population is apparently relatively inert to the terrorist threat, limited in its capability to develop an accurate perception of manifest reality and to generate demands for strategies of action that could more effectively face the challenge that the liberal American ideology must confront.

Since America's declared policy does not express this posture, those who oppose these declared policies found evidence in the scandals that emerged in the 1980s – particularly the so-called Iran-Contra scandals – that would typify American policy

as a *de facto* extremist policy, submerged under an eminently corrupt declared policy carried out by an American leadership devoted mainly to preserving the economic interests of the large corporations that formed the base of the American government. So the fight against terrorism would merely be rhetoric used to pacify the American population; a mere fiction, deliberately created to hide America's real interventionist intentions. The American government would be inducing a distorted view of reality, fostering an intellectual culture that accepts the various manifestations of strategic terrorism as a threat to America's national security.[37]

The conspirationists operate under the presumption that there is no way to stop the fundamentalist threat (Islamic and non-Islamic) manifested by strategic terrorism except by force, because their objectives lie in the context of an all-out war. For example, they cite the declaration of war against America, the "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders" issued by Osama Bin Laden in 1998, denouncing the occupation of "Islamic Lands in the Arabian Peninsula" by pagans and calling on all Moslems that believe in Allah and want to be rewarded in Heaven to obey the orders of Allah and kill all Americans (without differentiating between uniformed and civilian Americans) and pillage their assets, wherever they might be.[38] An all-out war would require an American strategy confronting terrorism with any means – including violent means – to protect American interests. In this sense, the use of "soft power" as configured by Joseph Nye,[39] would simply be a dangerous mistake.

The conspirationist view was clearly mapped out with military personnel, mainly among officers with ranks equivalent to colonel or lieutenant colonel in the reserves. Their positions were obtained from access to internet groups (with restricted password access). Note that the active duty officers interviewed (of the same ranks, and generals) were more affiliated with pragmatic idealism, since they were clearly expressing the "official opinion of their forces".

**Pragmatic Idealism**

The defenders of the pragmatic idealism view see the conspirationists as suffering from a political pathology, drowning in a historical delirium with no connection to reality. This is the view taken by educated pragmatists, the connoisseurs of the characteristics of American society. For them, the Americans' commitment to their national interests is part of a pragmatic posture in which the war against terror is a political instrument legitimately used by the government within the possibilities that the moral values of American society accept as valid. The idealists discuss the meaning of freedom, but emphasize the notion that the commitment of the USA to freedom entails the moral obligation to act against human rights violations, genocide, incursions against the democratic will, etc. For that reason, the idealists accept the war against terror as the price they have to pay to defend who and what they are. The idealists' defence of the American posture resides in the context of a policy whose guiding principles make the exercise of freedom (religious and civil) the right of everyone.

Interviews with university students, politicians and liberal arts professionals from Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile on the perception of the manifestation of terrorism in the Southern Cone revealed an express affiliation with pragmatic idealism, although in a posture completely unconnected to the American ideal and closer to a generic, almost utopian, idealism. In other words, an idealism associated with the rejection of armed violence as an instrument of policy. It is interesting to note that for this group the notion of terrorism is only perceived in connection with the American reaction to the action of Islamic extremist groups, unrelated to a

more inclusive/comprehensive notion – the majority of the students have already forgotten the rhetoric of the Shining Path group and, for example, cannot relate Abimael Guzmán Reynoso to that movement. In other words, terrorism is what they perceive through the news broadcast by the televised media[40] about the expression of terror and, currently, the expression constructed by Osama Bin Laden.

On the other hand, paradoxically,[41] there is a growing perception (much more predominant among university students, sporadic among politicians, and practically nonexistent in the liberal arts professions) of the need to redefine the concept of terrorism (as a result of the September 11 attack in the USA, the train attacks in Spain and, more recently, the attacks in England). It is interesting to note that the university students asked practically the same questions that oriented this research: which social construct makes terrorism emerge, and which prevents it from emerging? Here, note an extremely important factor: While the emergence of terrorism is assumed to be related to a given social construct, combating it is associated with the need for another social construct.

Once identified, this was the subject of a specific questionnaire with a different group, with interviews only in Brazil due to time constraints. The same premises were confirmed by a significant number of people interviewed (65%), with the addendum (25% of those interviewed) that the dichotomy would not be the result of the questions asked, but the profile (interests) of those involved in the responses. For this group, the knowledge of the social construct that would cause terrorism not to emerge was primarily associated with the international forces of pressure (NGOs and, principally, American interests), while the knowledge of the social construct that would make it possible to combat terrorism most efficiently would be of interest to the government and, more specifically, the armed forces (the federal police, in many instances associated without differentiation with military action). On the other hand, for the population at large, the desired response would be related to another question (not asked): How can things go on in this same situation without the emergence of terrorism in Latin America?

It is important to note that this question, placed in a broader historical context, in a way anticipates the potential for a possible explanation. The intellectual core that fed the perception of the validity of (and the need for) the use of terror as a factor to generate political changes in the past, which was previously associated with the so-called leftist ideologies, is now actually in power, the most obvious examples being Lula's Brazil and Tabaré Vázquez's Uruguay. In other words, the political forces that generated the motivation for conspiratorial terrorism in the past are those that now have the instrumental capability to prohibit its (re)emergence in the form of strategic terrorism. Its manifestation in Latin America, unlike in Europe, would be through networks of relationships, clandestine support and shelter structures, financing mechanisms, etc., that are now dormant in the hands of the politicians in power.

Assuming that this framework is correct, one immediate conclusion would be that the assurance of security (against terror) in Latin America must come from the stability of the democratic process; assuring the leftist groups now in power, and mainly their most radical wings, some guarantee of maintaining the rules of the political game (even though imperfect), inertializing the emergence of ideological postures that again adopt the perception that the only form of getting into power would be through violent action. Accordingly, for American interests, the non-emergence of terror in Latin America depends much more on the maintenance and refinement of democracy – such as, for example, increasing the educational level of

the population and establishing conditions for the development of a truly independent and critical press – than on (military or combined) anti-terrorism actions and even intelligence actions, since this very political stability inertializes the need for intelligence reports – intelligence about the void of terror inaction takes on a nature aimed much more at exploring changes in trends than investigating the facts that guide counter-terrorism actions.

## SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The operational definitions of conspiratorial terrorism and strategic terrorism appear to adequately capture the dichotomy of the nature of the past and possible future manifestations of the emergence of this phenomenon in the Southern Cone. They make it possible to differentiate their strategic objectives and see how terrorist groups saw (or see) themselves: the former as revolutionaries seeking state power with their current operational capabilities practically nonexistent, and the latter with the potential of developing in the region and seeking to define self-regulated spaces.

In the meantime, faced with the "ideological lethargy" – either pro or con – of the traditional sources of ideological support – the universities – it is obvious that these movements have not been successful in "selling their causes" and have been unable to achieve a recruitment that sensitizes (open or even secret) information systems, mainly because the strategic terrorism upheld by distorted religious fundamentalists finds no ideological referential except in small groups that they support in the capture and transfer of funds and temporary shelter for individuals linked with this type of terror. In other words, strategic terrorism is only finding an echo in social groups that have a cultural reference exogenous to the area of the Southern Cone, and are geographically concentrated. Terrorists from the various factions, when isolated from their communities located in geographic areas isolated from large urban centres, emerge and disappear in the multiplicity of societies and cultures of the Southern Cone. This is an important and little-studied phenomenon, but one that represents the potential for resolving many of the manifestations of strategic terrorism in other regions.

Although on the one hand the recruiting of new "militants" for strategic terrorism has not been observed, on the other hand it is obvious that the flow of information on terror to the region is slowly shaping a perception of terror as being a distant fact, practically foreign to the regional reality, creating a mechanism that strengthens the alienation of the strategic terrorism sustained by religious distortions, depriving its manifestation of ideological legitimacy.

It is clearly perceived that the governments of the countries of the Southern Cone are exploring this perception in two movement; the first in the sense of isolating themselves as much as possible from the "American" Global War on terror, while attempting to avoid any political or financial cost.[42] This movement is reflected in the official political postures that do not acknowledge a potential transition to strategic terrorism in the region, emphasizing that there is no already-configured threat of violent acts of terror, just a potential danger, or "an evil to be avoided!" The second movement is in the direction of establishing preventive strategies according to the following logic: (1) specializing the counter-terrorist intelligence services with the creation (or re-equipment) or special police units, (2) developing random actions of a political nature and repressive character. Note, however, that the strategies of the governments of the Southern Cone are aimed at the

prevention/neutralization of strategic terrorism through police specialization and integrated intelligence, and avoiding the engagement of the armed forces in operational actions.

Since strategic terrorism did not emerge operationally in the Southern Cone, it can be said that the following factors have been effective (without being able to say which or which combination of them is really predominant): 1) efficacy of operational strategies (police repression and integrated intelligence), 2) maintaining the expectation of the continuity of the rules of the political game, 3) ideological and intellectual distancing from the notion of terror (university and middle class isolation from and even indifference to the phenomenon), 4) characterization of the problem as a phenomenon external to the region and dissociated from the local culture (implicitly stated by the media and strengthened by government agencies).

Taking these four points as a reference, some observations and suggestions are developed below to contribute to the needs of USA policy formulation for the region that are simultaneously appropriate to its interests and to those of the region.

Meeting the demand for "qualified" personnel to engage the actions developed from the intentions of strategic terrorism is its principal vulnerability. This is the result of the disappearance of the conditions that contributed to the recruitment of conspiratorial terrorism, without the development of equally effective conditions in the environment. In other words, the second trend explaining the reasons that lead to engagement in terrorist actions no longer finds support among the major social groups that supply personnel for terrorism. Accordingly, creating conditions so that the third trend (global terrorist revolution) does not emerge as an explanatory-cognitive context becomes a strategic alternative. On the other hand, from the standpoint of counter-terrorism strategies, the vulnerability resides in the limitation to equip capabilities for the rapid processing of large volumes of data aimed at identifying associations that lead to the construction of patterns indicating complex non-linear terrorist acts.

While the strategic actions of the USA against terror in the Southern Cone should be better articulated, mainly politically, they should not induce the notion of a defence or security alliance incorporating all the countries of the region. Although this statement seems counterintuitive, the analysis points to the continuity of the same conditions that (*post facto*) made it obvious that this option was inadequate. In other words, such an alliance would end up inducing the transfer of strategic terrorism from other regions to the Southern Cone and primarily, with the eventual emergence of this type of terror, would induce its rapid diffusion to other countries of the region.

On this same line of argument, it should be noted that potential conditions already exist in the region for the development of strategic terrorism centered in the Brazilian border areas, and currently the factors that act against the emergence of terrorism are strongly anchored in the lack of support these actions find in the region due to prohibitive factors generated by the formation of the political power structure and the terrorists' lack of cultural or political identity with the local population. This does not mean that preventive actions with the indispensable support of intelligence under an inter-agency culture (interagency and international cooperation) are not important. On the contrary, although such actions are fundamental in the short term, in the long term only the continued maintenance and strengthening of the democratic process can ensure the prohibition of the manifestation of terrorism, at least until the old, now-dormant militants and

structures exhaust their capability of rekindling the ashes of the failure of conspiratorial terrorism under the aegis of strategic terrorism.

A corollary of this conclusion, extremely sensitive politically, but important for the USA and the perception of the countries of the region is the obvious fact that this democratic stability requires the continuation of the representativity and prestige of the so-called leftist parties now in power. This does not mean the removal of the mechanisms of democratic alternation of power, but the preservation of the political (and moral) authority of the opposition parties. This casts light on the risks of the current political crisis in Brazil, primarily due to the possibility of spin-off effects in other countries of the region, which does not yet appear to have been well understood in the region or in the USA.

In this same vein, it is highly advisable that the actions taken to neutralize the source of terrorist financing and protection for terrorist militants offered by the Triple Border area be understood in the context of this region's importance to the local economy. If these recommendations are implemented – in the sense of building more effective mechanisms of planning, scheduling and budgeting starting with the modernization of the armed forces – it is extremely pertinent to understand that the problem is much larger than the Triple Border area, since the conditions for the emergence of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone already exist all along the southern border of Brazil.

Neutralizing this potential threat – which would be explosive and have harmful effects for the region and for the world – requires the integrated economic development of the region, making the Mercosul play a fundamental role in the global war against terrorism. The NAFTA-Mercosul negotiators on both sides appear not to have understood this.

The above remarks point to one fundamental aspect. The actions against the emergence of strategic terrorism in the Southern Cone require the formulation of policies, at the highest level, integrating defence alternatives with economic alternatives which sustain ideological postures that do not threaten regional social and cultural structures. This is obvious, but seems to have been forgotten!

### Endnotes

[1] The author wishes to express his appreciation to the dedication and commitment of Thiago Fernandes Franco, research assistant, and to the members of the Interdisciplinary Studies Group of the International Relations Course of the Faculdades de Campinas (FACAMP) who provided a remarkable effort in researching and discussing subjects in support of this paper. Many of the conclusions offered here were originated from their ideas, comments, and innovative approaches. They deserve credit for a large part of the development of this article, and the author takes responsibility for any weaknesses.

"Prosfiction" is a term introduced in the area of strategic studies to characterize the logic engine used to for the exploration of future possibilities (forecasting) necessary for military transformation. For some applications of "prosfiction", see: Terraine, J., The Smoke and the Fire: Myths & Anti-Myths of War: 1861-1945. London, UK: Leo Cooper, 1992. Clark, I.F., Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars, 1763-3749. New York: Prentice Hall, 1993. The term will be contextualized and expanded throughout the text.
[2] Forecasting is based on premises of continuity of patterns recurring over time; which on the one hand depends on the availability of sufficient information about the past, and on

the other hand imposes a certain degree of inertia in identifying changes. This premise, established by Makridakis, can be found in detail in Makridakis, S.G., Forecasting: Planning and Strategy for The 21st Century. London, UK: Free Press, 1990. p. 9

Trending explores the possibilities of future plausible events conditioned by a set of possible events; these events are selected using criteria of inclusion and exclusion that are part of the same logic (same instrumental rationale) that guides the formulation of future events. In other words, trending is subject to what is considered rational according to the current logic of understanding what terrorism is or could be. Forecasting and trending as important analytical resources end up generating a continuous recycling of analyses and proposals of military and political action formulated based on limited premises. "Prosfictional" analysis, on the other hand, explores new architectures of relationships of past data and trends to construct new possibilities of future developments. It is responsible for guiding exploratory analyses of the logical extremes of possible futures, questioning ends, means, and the relationships between them, so it is only limited by the plausibility of the formulated alternatives – the possibility of their existence – which is a markedly subjective limit.

[3] The "prosfictional" approach is used in this paper as a complement to forecasting and trending in order to create, when necessary, a break with the recurring approaches to terrorism in the Southern Cone, which normally begin from analyses centered in a single country or particular region in order to devise generalizing conclusions (typically resulting in fallacies of generalizations) from them. For this reason, the analysis developed here takes the region as a whole in order to explore new frontiers of analysis, with the understanding that the manifestations of oppositional terrorism originate from national specificities, and with the further understanding that such an approach is imbued with the same weakness encountered in any similar proposal: the validity of the conclusions is limited to the sensitivity of the whole to the variations of its component parts (which limits the possibilities of merging particular aspects into an overall regional view without disregarding the specific nature of the impact those aspects produce).

[4] The limitations to any research on terrorism, principally when there is an attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships between its manifestations and the context in which they emerge, was very well consolidated by Martha Crenshaw (org). Terrorism in Context, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P. 1995, p. 5.

[5] Mearsheimer, J. "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics". New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 2001. Nye, J. "*Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*". New York: Public Affairs, 2004. Mearsheimer approaches the implementation of power politics using means of force (*hard power*), while Nye discusses the implementation of these politics through other, more intangible, means, permitting states to achieve their interests.

[6] Debray, R. *Revolution in the Revolution?* London: Pelican Latin American Library, Penguin Books, 1967.

[7] A summary of American political actions in its global war against terror with a focus on Latin America can be found at http://terrorismo.embaixada-americana.org.br/?action=artigo&idartigo=1144.

[8] Here we assume the polar opposition between an ideology identified around the principles that structure modern American liberal democracy and another manifested (as a basis or as a development) in religious fundamentalisms.

[9] The term "strategic terrorism" has gained increasing strength in its ability to summarize the manifestations of terrorism as practiced by radical groups such as Al Qaeda. One of its best interpreters is Picco, Giandomenico. *The Challenges of Strategic Terrorism*. Terrorism and Political. Violence 17:11-16 Winter.

[10] This point will be revisited and expanded in the section entitled "Frame of Analysis: Two Polar Views".

[11] It is interesting to note that in a way this situation replicates the initial errors committed in the French and English Colonial Wars, in which the traditional "military elite" forged in conventional wars scorned the officers trained in guerrilla combat, while it exalted officers who had been prepared for heroic battles. During the research, it was noted that the military men who had effectively been engaged in the fight against conspiratorial terrorism sought the protection of anonymity in the conventional military forces, with their heaps of operational knowledge – not recorded in open sources – practically lost. Leading to the

result that in the event of a return to the fight against terror, now strategic in form, the necessary knowledge effectively has to be recreated.

[12] The MAP programme was replaced in 1976 by the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Programme, in which training for the soldiers of Latin America's armed forces began to be offered in American installations instead of in the forces' own national territory, reflecting the concern of the US Congress that in-country training could emulate what had happened in Vietnam.

[13] Evidence of this situation can be found in the discussion of the role of the IPES/BAB, as described in Arns, P. and Wright, J. *Brasil:Nunca Mais*. São Paulo: Vozes,1985.

[14] Schenina R.L. *Latin America´s War: The Age of the Professional Soldiers, 1900-2001*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey´s Inc. 2003. p. 278.

[15] In all the countries of the Southern Cone, the term "national security" is associated with military strategies against terror. This situation – a sort of collective national unawareness – provokes a reaction – practically a political repudiation – of a necessary and important concept in the construction of policies that take account of the resurgence/fight against strategic terrorism. Note, for example, that Brazil's defence policy is in fact a document embodying a policy of national security. The same is seen in Paraguay and Uruguay, where the demarcation of the limits of civilian-military jurisdictions in the arenas of security and defence is still indistinct and tense. The way to reduce the tension is to not to put the matter up for discussion – which interests the governments seeking a non-confrontational situation, with an implicit recipe of what the armed forces can do, even if they are absolutely disarticulated politically and terribly obsolete in terms of force structures, doctrines, and concepts. The situation is different in Argentina, and more so in Chile, where the effort to discuss the preparation of their defence White Books forced the explanation and definition of civilian-military jurisdictions.

[16] The author thanks Dr. Richard E. Hayes, "Evidence Based Research, Inc." for access to the research material and the discussion on recurring patterns in the prediction of the behaviour of terrorist groups. Although the stages described were based on these patterns, they reflect the analysis conducted for the Southern Cone and in some aspects depart from those originally conceived. In fact, a time delay is observed in the manifestation of these patterns in the Southern Cone compared to those observed in the USA, revealing that apparently the countries of the Southern Cone have emulated the American spearhead in their research efforts.

[17] The US Department of State database –  Significant Terrorist Incidents, 1961-2003: A Brief Chronology. Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs. US Department of State. March 2004 – was used to gather these data.

[18] Some interviews that guided the next section of this article were conducted with people who were intimately acquainted with some of these terrorists who had plunged into anonymity for many years and who recently, with the region's democratization movement, allowed their identifies to be revealed, by themselves, in restricted circles. The author is enormously grateful to FFP (university professor and former terrorist group militant), EPM (stage actor, former terrorist group militant), and JLT (retired general and member of the intelligence service engaged in the repression of terrorism) for their trust in revealing, in confidence, facts, dates, names, and relationships, as well as permitting access to personal correspondence, which made this work possible.

[19] Although Peru is not included in the Southern Cone, the example is relevant for purposes of explaining terrorist manifestations around this region, since the mobility of people and information greatly reduces the significance of isolating the Southern Cone from the rest of the Latin American environment, except for analytical purposes. Accordingly, whenever it is deemed appropriate, examples from around the Southern Cone are used to serve as an alert against the possibility of the transitivity and spread of manifestations of terror in the region.

[20] It is worth remembering that intelligence actions alone did not neutralize the terrorist groups, but that the guarantee of a democratic environment and certain economic and social prosperity are necessary conditions for keeping these groups inactive. In addition to intelligence actions, those who aim at maintaining peace and security must put a value on maintaining the region's fragile equilibrium.

[21] This "modus operandi" was revealed after hundreds of cloned credit cards were discovered in an intelligence-supported operational action of the Federal Police of Brazil in the Triple Borders area.

[22] The information mentioned was kindly supplied by a former officer of the Paraguayan Army. The extensive documentation accessed further included data on various relationship structures between members of the Arab community living in the Triple Border area, the affiliations of Sunni and Shiite radical groups with the Abdallah, Barakat, and Huazi clans, and the relationships of those clans with Arab and Palestinian movements involved in terrorist attacks, as well as the association between the presence of individuals suspected of involvement with financing strategic terrorism with foreign banks in Paso de los Libres. Although relevant, this information was not included in the argumentation of the text because it detracts from the purpose of this study.

[23] Except the event in the Israeli embassy in Argentina.

[24] Informal conversation with agents of the Federal Police of Brazil, who emphasize the low operational cost of a terrorist attack. The author was unable to procure this data, which does not mean that the intelligence services operating in the region do not have it.

[25] It is interesting to note that the official agencies of Brazil do not formally acknowledge the relationship between money-laundering and other crimes and terrorism. For example, see: http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:QLvxu6PhdioJ:https://www.fazenda.gov.br/coaf/portugues/publicacoes/SumarioPublicoRelBrasilGafi2004.pdf+recursos+il%C3%ADcitos+na+Tr%C3%ADplice+Fronteira&hl=pt-BR.

[26] There is an as yet unresolved discussion in the countries of the Southern Cone about the definition of the scope of the jurisdiction of defence, and its inherent tasks. While a movement in the direction of military specialization and professionalization is observed, they are retaining many duties that are confused with the tasks of public safety and development.

[27] The results of these debates are recorded in regional periodicals, and can be followed on internet sites. For example, see
http://www.estadao.com.br/internacional/noticias/2005/jul/29/111.htm and
http://www.vermelho.org.br/diario/2005/0730/0730_base-paraguai.asp.

[28] For other classifications and analyses, see, for example, Daniele, Y. (ed). Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma *"The Trauma of Terrorism: Sharing Knowledge and Shared Care, An International Handbook.* Vol. 9, Nos. 1/2 and Nos. 3/4.

[29] Laqueur, W. *The Age of Terrorism".* Boston: Little Brown, 1987. Bion, W. *Experiences in Groups.* London, Tavistock, 1961 in Post, J. *Terrorist Pscycho-logic: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Psychological Forces. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins U.P. 2000.*

[30] According to Sebastian Vigliero (in Stanganelli, I.(org). *Seguridad y Defensa en El Cono Sul.* pag. 48, studies conducted in Europe agree in indicating that many terrorists do not exhibit serious pathologies, but a pattern can be perceived of aggressive personality associated with personal frustrations and professional failures, permeated by dysfunctional social behaviours.

[31] Post, J. *Terrorist Pscycho-logic: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Psychological Forces. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins U.P. 2000.* p. 31 and 34.

[32] Crenshaw, M. *Terrorism in Context* (org). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P., 1995. p. 15.

[33] Sprinzak, E "The Psychopolitical Formation of Extreme Left Terrorism in a Democracy: The case of Weathermen. In Reich, W. (ed) *Origins of Terrorism Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998. p.* 77.

[34] Reading the text of David Scott Palmer ["The Revolutionary Terrorism of Peru´s Shining Path", in Crenshaw, M. *Terrorism in Context* (org). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania U.P., 1995] gains particular relevance, principally because it makes it possible to identify the fundamental role of the leadership of Abimael Guzmán in maintaining the internal cohesion of the Shining Path.

[35] In June 2005, the author interviewed three businessmen, MM, CGR, and RRT, with businesses and ventures in Southern Cone areas subject to the possibility of the emergence of terrorism, who revealed this situation. According to MM, many local businessmen, primarily small businessmen, ended up opting for this practice for two reasons. First, the difficulty of access and risks of making formal contacts with the government to act against the extortion to which they are subjected. Second, even when such contacts are made, the

responses are inadequate, slow, and for the most part absolutely disastrous. It was obvious during the interview with MM that the armed forces/police are absolutely unprepared to handle the demands of combating strategic terrorism, and that this inadequacy is not merely material, but procedural and, primarily, conceptual.

[36] The option to select the perception of the USA as an intervening variable is no accident; it is the result of a careful choice that ended up finding the other currently used measures inadequate. Although politically sensitive, it makes it possible to gauge degrees of convergence and divergence of ideological profiles with respect to a known reference. On the other hand, the frame of analysis also contributed to a perception of the future degree of acceptability of American policies for the region. Note, however, that this frame is of a nature instrumental to the purposes of this paper, and must be validated with the perception of other analysts and students of the subject. Accordingly, its validity depends on its usefulness for the purpose of identifying the potential conditions of ideological recruiting for terrorism in the Southern Cone.

[37] Chomsky, N. Chomsky, N. *The Culture of Terrorism.* Boston, MA: South End Press, 1998.

[38] Text excerpted from the World Islamic Front Statement - "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders", on the internet at http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm. Picked up in May 2005.

[39] Nye, J. Jr. *Soft Powe: The Means to Success in World Politics.* New York: PublicAffairs, 2002. Nye defines *Soft Power* as the ability to influence preferences without using direct or explicit force. To that end, the capability of producing *Soft Power* is associated with three factors: culture, political values, and foreign policy.

[40] About 73% of those interviewed reported that they did not read the news about terrorism in the papers because it was repetitive, uninteresting, and unrelated to their national reality, and that they learned about terrorist actions through TV journalism when this news is presented as news blocks at the regular news time. Even students of international relations among those interviewed apparently do not look for the news about terror, since that discussion is outside their scope of interest (there is no formal academic demand for this type of study at the graduate level and very little to the post-graduate level, except for students who are specializing in subjects relating to international security. It can be said that in the Southern Cone general university knowledge about terrorism is superficial, full of preconceptions, and reflects the posture of televised editorials more than a critical consciousness resulting from reading and thinking.

[41] The term paradoxical is used here due to the apparent contradiction of the facts, without it being possible to evidence the relationship between them in the research. In this case, it must be acknowledged that this factor is the result of the research method, aimed more at the perception of the manifestation of terrorism than at the cognitive processes that lead to that perception.

[42] One curious aspect was the "revolt" of Uruguayan public officials against the requirement to establish certain port and airport security procedures that increased their operating costs in response to an American request. In other words, the perception of costs is dissociated from the expectation of benefits.