

*Distinction
of three forms
necessary
for analysis*

strument of interstate terrorism, and the present nuclear balance based on threats of mutual retaliation against population centres corresponds, at least potentially, to the use of terrorist strategy in international conflicts. An analysis of terrorism must, therefore, consider its three possible forms: repressive terrorism, which is directed downwards; insurrectional terrorism, which is directed upwards; and interstate terrorism, which operates horizontally, between political units.

This distinction is useful in analysing terrorism, but in itself is not adequate to define the unique characteristics of the phenomenon. Not all insurrections, repressions and international wars are, or necessarily become, terrorist activities. We live in societies that have not so far removed violence from human relations, and there is nothing to indicate that this will be achieved within the foreseeable future. Consequently, the various forms of violence should not be lumped together and censured indiscriminately. Even if it is thought that all acts of violence are to be condemned (a position that is held, and whose consequences are accepted, by almost no one), it must not therefore be concluded that all forms of violence have the same characteristics and the same effects.

Psychological gains

Terrorist activities are characterized by their use of violence in order to achieve psychological and symbolic effects rather than physical and material gains. In classical strategy — as described by Clausewitz, for example —, the purpose of war is to disarm the adversary, to remove his means of action in order to control his will. A strategy can be described as terrorist when it seeks to reduce activities directed against the adversary's resources and tends to act directly upon his will — in most cases by instilling a fear that paralyzes him. One of the most typical examples of such a strategy is the "Baedeker raids" carried out in 1942 by the German air force in retaliation for Allied bombing of German cities. These raids were directed against small English towns that possessed considerable historical and artistic importance but were not economically or strategically significant. Since the Germans could not prevent the English bombers from flying over their territory and destroying the bases out of which they were operating, they tried (unsuccessfully) to persuade the English to discontinue their attacks by striking not at their means of conducting aerial warfare but at symbols that were important to the British people.

*Terrorist strategy
directed against
enemy's will*

It is possible to distinguish degrees of terrorism in the use of violence in any conflict. Here we have both a useful analytical tool and one of the basic choices facing the men engaged in armed combat, whether these are the rulers of a country at war, the heads of a force responsible for keeping order or the leaders of an insurrectional movement. In the Second World War, England's strategy of bombing the German civilian population at night was much more of a terrorist activity than the United States' bombing of factories by day. The *coup d'état* in Athens in 1967 was less terrorist than the one in Santiago in 1973. The latter was an exceptionally brutal *coup* for a South American country; the brutality was designed to prevent the organization of a resistance movement by terrifying the potential popular base of any such movement. The British Army is using terrorism in Northern Ireland much less than the French Army did in Algeria; the French approach was based on collective responsibility and indiscriminate arrests and executions. One of the controversies that divided the French resistance movement during the German occupation concerned the advisability of a terrorist strategy of individual attacks on German soldiers. The Front of National Liberation (FLN) in Algeria adopted a progressively more terrorist strategy; in 1954, its members had strict orders to avoid causing casualties among the European civilian population, whereas in 1957 they were planting bombs in cafés in Algiers.

Effectiveness

It is impossible to lay down general rules about the effectiveness of terrorism, because this type of strategy must be evaluated in the light of the objectives of those who use it. However, it is probable that terrorism is less effective the better organized or more highly motivated the adversary is. The terrorist bombings of German cities did not remove the need for Allied penetration to the very heart of Germany, and studies conducted after the war showed that the contribution of these attacks to the final victory had been very slight, in comparison with the quantity of resources deployed for them. On the other hand, when the Americans bombed Japanese cities — a tactic they had criticized the English for using —, the capitulation of Japan was hastened; the Japanese were much less prepared than the Germans to endure the bombing without panic and disorganization.

The repressive terrorism used by the French Army in Algeria proved counter-productive; not only did it not "re-