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Diplomatic Rhetoric in the South

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DIPLOMATIC RHETORIC IN THE SOUTH

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The syndrome of disproportion in Argentine foreign policy

Roberto Russell

During the celebrations of her Bicentenary (2010), Argentina has been often portrayed as a country isolated from the world, whether by its own decision or actions or due to the practices of others. It is important to distinguish the intention of moving away or not intervening in international affairs — a policy of isolationism — from the practice that produces a (perhaps unwanted) result of foreign isolation. In this case, isolation is the consequence of policies by foreign actors withdrawing the country from contact and communication, or punishing it for certain actions. It can also be a result of the lack or loss of international relevance or of the indifference of others. ¹

It is worth making these distinctions because Argentina, unlike the United States of America, never made isolationism the doctrine of its foreign policy. However, throughout the century it expressed two forms of isolationism of diverse content: one political and the other economic. The first adjusted more appropriately to what is understood as isolationism in matters of international relations. A foreign practice of non-political involvement that does not mean a disinterest in developing ties of a different nature with the world.

This way of relating internationally was characteristic of the first long cycle of the foreign policy. During all those years, the ruling class of Argentina avoided political alliances and commitments that could affect its economic ties with the world, particularly with Europe, where the country had to seek, as Alberdi pointed out: "not its political allies, but commerce and navigation treaties". An attitude — as he clarified — that could not be understood as "barbaric and Paraguayan isolationism" but rather as a position of independence, of reserve in politics and of abstention from leagues and treaties. The Argentina of the first cycle incarnated, in its own way, the same isolationism George Washington and Thomas Jefferson had proposed for their country: "Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations — entangling alliances with none". Unlike the American, the Argentine isolationism of that time lacked a sense of mission, but had — as did the former — a clear practical sense: the defence of material interests, the implementation of which was essentially in Europe.

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¹ Readers are invited to refer to the bibliographical dossier on Argentina at end of volume.

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Argentina's political isolationism worked magnificently while the world was at peace. World War I put it to the test for the first time, but the governments of Victorino de la Plaza — a conservative — and later of Hipólito Yrigoyen — the first radical president - protected it in the form of neutrality, a natural response to these circumstances imposed by the country's main economic interests of the country. To this material aspect, Yrigoyen would add an ethical component: a characteristic of his convictions and of his particular vision of international relations. During the most critical phases of the war, he remained firm in his defence of neutrality despite pressure from Washington. the sinking of two Argentine ships by German submarines and serious diplomatic conflicts with Berlin, and despite his Congress being mainly against and the public opinion being more and more inclined to declare war on Germany - particularly after the United States of America entered the conflict in April of 1917. Once the war had concluded, the principled attitude of the president left Argentina out of the League of Nations, against the opinion — once again — of a large part of the society and of his own party, where he found a particularly strong opposition by Alvear — his ambassador to Paris. When he had to govern Argentina, Yrigoyen's successor could not break the Congress' opposition to incorporating it into that international forum — as was his intention.

The emphasis on ethics and the nations' equality also lead Yrigoyen to oppose the ratification of the ABC Pact, an agreement signed in May 1915 in Buenos Aires by Argentina, Brazil and Chile with the purpose of facilitating a peaceful solution to the disputes that could arise among the countries of the hemisphere. The Pact endorsed an emerging and productive process of trilateral cooperation that had had its maximum expression in a joint peace initiative to mediate in an existing conflict between Mexico and the United States of America in 1914. Their non ratification — even by Brazil and Chile ended the alliance between the three countries and the idea of rescuing it to constitute a force in the struggle for peace and stability in Latin America, particularly in South America, was intermittently left up in the air since then. Yrigoyen considered that the Pact situated Argentina, Brazil and Chile in a position of superiority before the rest; the other countries did not hide their concern regarding an agreement that could lead to the formation of an influential alliance in the region, and saw it as an initiative that has its place within the framework of the Pan American policy favoured by Washington, something he most certainly disliked.

The opposition to Pan Americanism was the hemispheric arm of Argentina's political isolationism of the first cycle, which — for different reasons — went on beyond its conclusion. In this case it had to do with opposing ideas of continental solidarity that would compromise the margin of the country's international action and with fighting tooth and nail to defend the principles of non intervention and self determination. This policy was

expressed consistently and with a certain arrogance from 1889 onward and in a challenging way in the 1930s, to reach its highest point in Argentine neutrality during World War II. Many factors influenced this decision that was maintained against all odds almost until the end of the war; but there is no doubt that it fed on political isolationism in its purest form and on nationalist components of the most recent tradition. Under strong pressure from Washington, diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions were the foreign response to Argentina's conduct, the greatest punishment received by the country in the century. From 1942 onward, Roosevelt's government showed that it was not going to tolerate rebellions: it harassed the country economically with numerous measures that were applied with varied intensity - that would gradually weaken and end by 1949 - and pressured the Latin American and European nations for them to withdraw their ambassadors accredited to Buenos Aires — a request that was obeyed by most of them. Great Britain, always more contemplative with Argentina because of its need for Argentine products, especially beef (40% of their consumption during the years of the war), also gave in to their main ally's requests and withdrew their ambassador on 8 July 1944, eight days after the United States of America.

From that date onward, Argentina was diplomatically isolated from the world, despite having broken its ties with Germany and Japan on 26 January that year, and its economic ties with the Axis countries being practically interrupted during the years of the war. Both Washington and Moscow wanted more from Argentina: a clear commitment to the allied cause and a declaration of war on Germany and Japan. The refusal by Farrell's government to give in to such pressures lead to Argentina being deliberately excluded from the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace that met, at the initiative of the United States of America, from 21 February to 7 March 1945 at the Palace of Chapultepec in Mexico City. It was also almost excluded from the Conference of the United Nations. celebrated in San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945, in which the UN was created and the pillars of the post-war world order were established. Argentina came beleaguered to an international occasion of enormous importance. Good fortune in politics played in their favour this time, as the differences between Washington and Moscow regarding the members that should form the new organisation as founders opened the doors for them to be accepted into the Conference on 1 May 1945, after an intense debate in which Argentina received the approval of the United States of America and Great Britain and firm support from the Latin American countries. This long and sinuous process was marked out by secret missions, equally secret agreements between the Foreign Office and President Roosevelt, disputes in the State Department about the treatment that Argentina should receive, deliberations in the Yalta Conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin - always the hardest on the 'fascist state' of Argentina - and, incidentally,

great discrepancies in the country. The declaration of war on Germany and Japan on 27 March 1945, in which Perón had a decisive role, was only supported by a heterogeneous minority: the radicals, socialists and conservatives were against, the army resisted, the aeronautics sector was divided and the navy was in favour of belligerency — as were the communists and the greater part of the industrials. This majority — and also diverse — opposition at such a critical moment for the country, and almost at the end of the war, is the best proof of the power that political isolationism still had in Argentina in the mid 1940s.

Just as World War I had challenged the liberal political isolationism, the crisis of 1930 facilitated the emergence of the second form of isolationism of the century, the economic one. The war had shown that the good could possibly not live forever and the crisis confirmed what until then had been unsettling suspicions: Argentina lost markets due to Europe's and the the United States of America's protectionism and traditional sources of supply (a way of isolating it) and tried to protect itself with barriers to trade and the development of the substitutive industry (a way of isolating itself). This is the starting point of Argentina's economic isolationism — imposed at first and intentional later — and which lasted until the 1960s. The internal and external circumstances that supported this protectionist and 'redistributionist' economic policy are explained convincingly in Pablo Gerchunoff's essay that constitutes that volume and it is not worth continuing on this matter here. I do, however, want to emphasise that the shutdown of the economy had its correlate in a foreign policy based on defending the principles of non intervention and self determination, that renewed the dogma of peace for a world marked by the East-West and North-South polarities. Peace had been defined by the men of the Generation of '80 as a condition for foreign trade; now it emerged as a condition for economic development and for the survival of humanity in the face of the threat of a nuclear holocaust. The scenario of the Cold War and the growing interdependencies turned obsolete the formula conceived by those who governed the Argentina of the first cycle — to protect it from the external inclemency - and called for other formulae. The Argentina of the second post-war period opted for an 'independent' foreign policy — of a defensive nature — that brought it closer to certain claims of the Third World for considering them appropriate and pertinent, and often separated it from the United States of America due to different interpretations of the causes and conditions of economic development and the source of political and social struggles in Latin America and in the South in general. The analysis that prevailed over the need to work in favour of the détente in the East-West conflict and over the problems of underdevelopment determined a great part of the constant themes in the foreign policy of the second cycle. Argentina was not politically isolationist or isolated from other countries for its practices and it played, in short, what in Latin America was the game of the moment.

There were those who considered this form of relating with the world inappropriate and accused them of being isolationist, indirectly indicating that they were not with the West. This criticism is important because in it is the earliest emergence of the theory on Argentine isolationism as a characteristic and harmful trait for the country. Another arguable way of establishing 'facts' about the Argentina of the second centenary that contributes to promoting national failure mania. The theory - very poor and short in historical perspective — was revived in recent years by the debate Kichner's foreign policy has sparked, and particularly the foreign alliances it has favoured. Thus far, I have tried to show in which aspects and up to what point Argentina was isolationist, and when and why it was isolated from the world — for reasons of their own or of others. In a few stylized lines: it was isolationist in the political sphere and open in the economic sphere during the first cycle (a conduct that surely the entire centre-right would praise, with minor criticism) and it was partly isolated due to the protectionism that followed the crisis of 1930; it was partly isolationist in the economic sphere from the decade of 1930 and up to the 1960s, and internationally active — although defensive — from the mid 1940s until the Process (a practice, in this case, that would be understood and favoured by the centre-left spectrum and the nationalist sectors, with equally minor criticism). It was only isolated politically and punished economically in the first half of the decade of 1940 (as a consequence of the neutrality in World War II, a position that divided the country until the end of the conflict). I will now go on to speak of Argentina's second situation of political isolation, which was not as serious as the one it went through during World War II and which had no significant impacts in the economic plane.

The Process never had a vocation of isolationism: interventionist and militant in its international missions. Its activism earned them few and contemptible partners and it closed political doors: those of the United States of America with Carter and of most European countries. With Reagan it could have coexisted well, but the Falklands got in the way. Videla had territories that were increasingly banned, but Martínez de Hoz was well received nearly everywhere — in some places even with red carpet treatment. Here one can speak of political cornering and solitude and of economic accompaniment and closeness, a situation that shows the complexity of this world and the diversity of actors and boards that it consists of. Pinochet could have told a similar story. The Process was also difficult within its borders in the Southern Cone due to the differences with Brazil and Chile. Its violations of human rights also ended up entangling its relations with Mexico and Venezuela. So, it had to look elsewhere for company and even understanding; the scope closest at hand for this task was the Non-Aligned Countries Movement, despite the military's ideological opposition to the philosophy and objectives of this forum. The dictatorship found in the NAM ears that were willing to listen to its version of the 'dirty war' that included an anticolonial and anti-imperialist touch, in tune with the language that prevails in the Movement. It spoke of the imperialist and unacceptable intervention of powerful countries against the nations of the 'misunderstood' South, an unsuspected advance of the same discourse it would use to criticise the Western countries after the defeat of the Falklands.

After the years of the Process, the message of Argentina's international reinsertion brought by Alfonsín now made sense. Also the idea of changing its international image, which had been seriously harmed by violations of human rights and the Falklands conflict. It was not in Alfonsín's or Menem's disposition to be isolationist. Each in their own way, in very different contexts and with different priorities and credentials, they travelled the planet from top to bottom. Argentina filled up with foreign leaders and high-level authorities and the two presidents were invited to carry out state visits in numerous countries. The government of Alfonsín combined defensive and offensive policies, especially to look after the young democracy; Menem's was the paradigm of offensive policies, in a world already distinguished and dominated by the optimistic visions of liberal thought in the fields of economy and international politics. Both committed the country through agreements and international regimes voluntarily handing over spaces of sovereignty in the management of the public policies on human rights, defending the democracy, international safety and the development of sensitive technologies, particularly in the nuclear field. Both participated actively in the defence of democracy and peace in Latin America. Argentina increased to an unprecedented degree its participation in the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPK), a policy inaugurated in 1958. Very much in line with the tendency of the 1990s, Argentina was by far the greatest provider of troops to the UNPK in all of Latin America. In summary, one cannot talk of isolationism in this stage of foreign policy permeated with different orientations.

(Translated by Clara Tilve)

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International rhetoric and diplomatic discourse: A South African / Canadian indigenous encounter

Glenn Babb

Hypocrisy is the most difficult and nerve-racking vice that any man can pursue; it needs an unceasing vigilance and a rare detachment of spirit. It cannot, like adultery or gluttony, be practised at spare moments; it is a wholetime job.

W. Somerset Maugham, Cakes and Ale¹

The twentieth century marked the apogee of man's inhumanity to man with varied calculations of millions of deaths caused by Mao, Soviet Communism, Khmer Rouge, Castro, Indians and Pakistanis, Brazilians, Mengistu and Burundians.² All of these gross violations of human rights were "a negation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations". And the United Nations General Assembly is the conscience of the world.

Both the world at large and the States members of the General Assembly were all too aware of these abuses. Despite this knowledge, a researcher would be hard put to glean this information from a reading of the General Assembly Resolutions. One of the reasons for this paucity of action by the General Assembly lies in the fact that the violations of human rights took place within the frontiers of the offending states. It is only when actions of states cross frontiers that the General Assembly condemns the acts and even then in muted tones. The three resolutions about the invasion of Tibet do not mention China by name. The General Assembly deplores the Soviet invasion of Hungary,³ but does not the invasion of Czechoslovakia nor makes mention of the USSR in condemning the invasion of Afghanistan. Internal oppression within the frontiers usually does not stir the General Assembly to action. Thus, the Khmer Rouge, despite the acknowledged genocide, maintained their seat in the General Assembly until 1990 when the "Supreme National Council" took it over. There are several examples of the General Assembly passing over in silence internal human rights violations in China,⁴

¹ W. Somerset Maugham, *Cakes and Ale* (London: William Heinemann, 1930).

² Stephen Pinker, *The better angels of our nature: The decline of violence in history and its causes* (New York: Allen Lane, 2011) in terms of proportional death toll puts the 8th Century Chinese Alushan Civil War at the top of the list – a sixth of the world's population extinguished.

³ Resolution 1131/2 (XI).

⁴ Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao - The untold story* (London: Vintage Books,

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USSR, Uganda, Cuba, Brazil and India. The General Assembly nevertheless suspended South Africa and Israel restricting their access to UN bodies.

The country sought out for the label of having a policy of "negation of the purposes and principles of the Charter" eventually falling into the category of a crime against humanity,⁵ was South Africa. Apartheid received the most reproof and condemnation (216 General Assembly Resolutions 1945 - 1994 and South West Africa, administered by South Africa, merited 197). The policy was indeniably reprehensible, but the gamut of rhetorical uses of the case remain by and large unquestioned. The underlying question a career diplomat like myself — who served in ambassadorial posts before and after the installation of democracy — is bound to ask in retrospect is the following: if diplomats finger the internal human rights violations of other States, what do diplomats achieve? Usually the result is pre-empted by Charter of the United Nations in its Article 2.7 which forbids interference in the internal affairs of other states. What has often characterised the United Nations' declamatory rhetoric around horrors in the world is in essence a vague, indirect and allusive language, except on occasions where a State actually invades another - so China received three reprimands for Tibet without the word "China" ever appearing in the Resolutions. This essay deals with one example of diplomatic discourse cutting across the set rhetoric of the United Nations, that is how South Africa's ostracism found itself at the heart of a "rhetorical situation" in Canada.

The specific background to this essay is a *prise de conscience* by leading Commonwealth ex-Dominions (setting aside the vexed case of India, which deserves a treatment on its own), Australia and Canada with regard to their treatment of "First Nations". In plain, undiplomatic terms, they have both been let off the hook for a century until very recently, and certainly were when the other ex-Dominion, South Africa, was condemned for its official, racist policies.

Only as the aboriginal peoples in Australia took a hard-line stance and as their grievances were given a popular airing did the Australian government show a sense of shame.⁸ The aborigines became voters for the

^{2006).}

⁵ Resolution 2786 (XXVI) Draft Resolution on the suppression and punishment of the "Crime of Apartheid".

⁶ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu found that at least 21 000 people had died directly or indirectly because of Apartheid and that the police and security forces were responsible for 518 of those. Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commmission 1, pp. 163, para. 18

⁷ GA Resolutions 1353 (1959), 1723 (1961) and 2079 (1965 — the last General Assembly Resolution) — the resolutions all deplore the violation of the human rights and the freedoms of the people of Tibet without once fingering China.

⁸ See the film "Rabbit-proof fence" (2002) directed by Philip Noyce depicting the

first time in 1962. Their numbers have grown to 2,8% of the population — they now number 458 000, and can get up a bit of critical mass for themselves. On 13 February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised in Parliament for the "lost generations" of aborigines removed from their homes to attend schools which squeezed out their aborigine character and language for over a hundred years from 1869 till 1969. Since the forming of the Australian Commonwealth the first aborigine to enter the House of Representatives was Ken Wyatt on 28 September 2010, in other words, 109 years after Australia had its first constitution. The Australians also did a belated job of window-dressing by incorporating aboriginals in the opening ceremony for the Olympic Games and had an aboriginal athlete carry the torch.

In Canada, Indians, or to use the pre-emptive cringe of the Dominions, the "First Nations", ¹⁰ remain subject to the Indian Act (1876) — or at least "status" or "registered" Indians do. There are other categories of Indians such as *métis* (the French for "half-cast") and "non-status Indians", those not registered on band rolls — of which there are 616. Canadians have hovered between assimilating the Indians and museumising them. ¹¹ In the assimilation phases, just as in Australia, Canada adopted an "Indian Residential School System" forcing children away from their tribes and clans to schools where only English could be spoken and Western ways learnt. ¹² It led to a total immersion and lasted from the 1840s until the last residential school closed in 1996. Belatedly, on 11 June 2011, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, following in his Australian counterpart's footsteps, apologised for past governments' policies of assimilation. Using the spin of having token First Nations representatives in Parliament he said the following mealy-mouthed words:

We now recognise that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow... You have

removal of half-cast aborigines from their home to a "re-education camp". See also the film *Once were warriors*, Lee Tamahori, dir. (1994), depicting New Zealand Maoris' degradation.

⁹ And even in to the 1970s in some cases.

¹⁰ A term which includes the Eskimos who were then Inuit and later also First Nations — hard to see how you describe yourself: "I'm a First Nation"? Those I met had no quibble with the term "Indian".

On the 50th anniversary of the city of Vancouver which was founded in the same year as Johannesburg, Vancouver donated a totem pole to Johannesburg which stood in the Library Gardens.

¹² Some pretty telling Canadian legislation preceded this — note the titles of the *Gradual Civilisation Act* (1857) and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* (1869).

been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.¹³

However in 135 years only 27 self-identifying aboriginal people have entered the House of Commons out of a possible number of 10 345 seats. Status Indians only got the vote 50 years ago. Harper made no promise to improve the lot of the "First Nations" who still live under the authority of the Indian Act which, with its amendments, forbids religious ceremonies such as potlatches and dances, permits the removal of aboriginal people from reserves near towns, permits expropriation of Indian land by municipalities for public works and the removal of whole reserves if deemed "expedient", requires Western Indians to get permission to wear "aboriginal costume" in pageants and allows Indian agents to attend band council meetings and to cast deciding votes in the event of a tied vote. 14

Both Australia and Canada have managed for centuries to airbrush out of the democratic narrative the lot of the indigenous peoples the whites displaced. The weasel words used by Rudd and Harper are seen for what they are: a necessary display of rhetoric to quieten the more vociferous purveyors of guilt. In Canada, the reason for the half-heartedness is explained by Harry Swain, former Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs: "Because no politician got his bread buttered by taking on the Indian issue". ¹⁵

So, if rhetoric is a narrative which has an effect upon the audience, how much more effect has a deed which is intended to bring about an effect upon spectators of a rhetorical act? After the deeds, narrators and commentators describe them in words and pictures.¹⁶

The deed

Twenty-five years ago exactly such a deed — literally a finger-pointing — brought the Canadians up short. In an interview in Vancouver, the most famous Canadian interviewer, Jack Webster, asked me, as South African ambassador to Ottawa: "If you were a man from Mars and came to earth, what would you think of all the torrent of criticism of South Africa?" My reply was: "If all the people in the village swept before their own door, the village would soon be clean". It befell me to show in 1987 that Canada was not free from its own denialist rhetoric.

¹³ The Globe and Mail (12 June 2008).

¹⁴ "Update Notice to the Justice Laws site"; *Indian Act Dept. of Justice Canada:* http://laws.justice.gc.can.

¹⁵ The Star (Toronto: 30 October 2010).

¹⁶ See my soon-to-be published memoirs: *In one era and out of the other*.

In an article¹⁷ about South Africa for the *Influence* periodical, I quoted from the White Paper (1969) on Indians under Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and the Report "Indian Self-Government in Canada" of the Special Committee of the House of Commons, ¹⁸ showing how Indians had the highest proportion of jail time, a death rate two to four times the rate of non-Indians, infant mortality 60% higher than the national rate, the highest proportion of alcoholism and the lowest income of any community in Canada. Moreover, I quoted startling statistics about the original native populations in Australia, South Africa, Canada and the USA on the arrival of the whites — all were less than a million — the only "native" population now to have risen above a million (tens of millions) is that of South Africa — the others stay well below the million mark.

It was a short citation but has caused long, continuing controversy to this very day. Prime Minister Mulroney who was visiting the Vatican at the time and was chastised by the Holy Father for the treatment of the Native Peoples, was shown a copy of the article and asked by a journalist how he would respond. "I will not dignify it with a response" was his reported retort — which resulted in a greater furore.

Contemporaneously with the deed, Minister of External Relations, Joe Clark, repaired to Zambia and waived that country's debt to Canada of \$96 million. Further furore.

One person who saw the possibilities resulting from the *Influence* article was Louis Stevenson, chief of the 3500-strong Peguis Indian Band, north of Winnipeg. "Ah", he had thought to himself, "get the vilified South African ambassador to my reserve and that will wake the authorities from their torpor". Real action-rhetoric. I had scrupulously avoided commenting on the internal politics of Canada since my arrival in Canada in 1985 — enough was enough. The Canadian Embassy in South Africa was acting as a conduit for all the disaffected parties in the land, the ambassador did not restrain himself on what he thought of the South African government: he and his wife participated in demonstrations, involved themselves in protests and channeled political demands by radical organisations to the government and the world at large, taking their cue from the Canadian permanent representative to the UN, Stephen Lewis, who labelled South Africa "the most heinous regime on earth".

The Indian chief, Louis Stevenson, wanted my presence as a deed of rhetoric to make the Canadian government react. The Canadian government saw the potential embarrassment from the Apartheid ambassador being near one of its racial sores. It tried to get Stevenson to disinvite me. He responded

¹⁷ Glenn R. W. Babb, "Blind spots I have observed in Canada", *Influence* (February/March 1987).

¹⁸ October 1983.

saying he would disinvite the ambassador if Prime Minister Mulroney took my place, which was unlikely: his Tory erstwhile predecessor Prime Minister, Diefenbaker, had spearheaded the move to force South Africa out of the Commonwealth.

The media also saw the South African ambassador's visit to an Indian reserve as potentially explosive. Dawned the day and eighty journalists and cameramen were there to record the event after the press had worked up a head of steam about it for weeks. Interestingly, none of the Canadian journalists whom I spoke to at the Peguis Indian Band had ever visited an Indian Reserve before.

It was therefore an eye-opener for them and their TV viewers to see how the Indians actually live in huts and tents at -20° C without running water (water doesn't run at -20° C) just emphasising the fact revealed by the Commons' report that 40% of Indian homes did not have sewerage. Chief Louis Stevenson was delighted by his action-rhetoric, as he should have been since he had a sense of humour: "Ambassador, would you like a twenty-one arrow salute?" he asked as I arrived.

What Chief Stevenson told the world was that of the 3 500 status Indians on the Peguis Reserve, only 57 had employment, the rest living off the \$350 given monthly to them by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Territories. The roads were all gravel and the bridges had broken down. Although the Reserve flanks Lake Winnipeg, one of the largest extents of fresh water in the world, what fish the Indians caught had to be sold through the Fish Marketing Board and what wild rice they grew also had to do the Manitoba socialist round through a marketing board. The cameras showed the bored youth playing cards in a half-used clinic and children living in one roomed unheated huts.

Chief Stevenson got the publicity he needed from his invitation. Many journalists went away sorrowing. Stevenson asked me to submit a request to the South African government for aid equivalent to the Zambian debt to Canada which Joe Clarke, the Foreign Minister had recently waived.

The reaction

I was not the initiator of the visit to the Peguis Indian Band, but a willing participant and played the main part. Had I not been the so-called Apartheid government's representative and had there not been the relentless attack on South Africa by Canada, the visit would have been another thing to airbrush out of the Canadian reality. But the rhetorical deed having thus been done, the Pandora's Box could not be shut. Of course, the first reaction was: "pot calling the kettle black", which was defensive rhetoric, then there was anger and counter-attack which used all the stereotypes of the white South African

government, the more reflective response showing a little guilt and recalling that in the 1950s Canada had exchanged information about reserves with South Africa at the time of Tomlinson Commission, which set the homeland policy in motion. 19

1. The first reaction evened the playing field a little – "pot calling the kettle black" was an admission of the misdeeds.





¹⁹ 1951

²⁰ Illustration by kind permission - Kamianisk, Winnipeg Sun (10 March 1987).

²¹ Illustration by kind permission - Gireaud, *La Presse* (Montreal: 13 March 1987).

2. The attack dogs were outraged that the "white racist" had dared to sully the good name of Canada.







 $^{^{22} \}mbox{Illustration}$ by kind permission - Susan Dewar, $\mbox{\it Calgary Sun}$ (10 March 1987).

²³ Illustration by kind permission - Vance Rodewalt, *Calgary Herald* (12 March 1987).

3. The reflective response granted the belief that Indians were at the bottom of the Canadian pile.



The flurry of media and official attention was like disturbing an ant's nest, but the outward fuss died down in the mass of other news to *épater les bourgeois*. The underlying resentment and anger seethed on, however, especially in the groves of academe.

The long-term assessment of this diplomatic-rhetorical deed shows it is an effective tool in permanently demonstrating a link between Canada's policy and South Africa's racial structures. Sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists in universities could never forgive me for upstaging their writings and proposals on First Nations. In 2010 academics were still referring to the visit in pungent terms: John S. Saul, Professor Emeritus of Politics at York University Toronto, wrote: "...deeply unpleasant Glenn Babb's aggressive tour... turned the occasion skilfully to his account pointing out the grim, if somewhat divergent, parallels between the practices of the two countries". ²⁵

²⁴Illustration by kind permission - Alan King, *The Citizen* (Ottawa: 24 February 1987).

²⁵ Presentation to the South African Association of Canadian Studies (Cape Town) "Two fronts of anti-Apartheid struggle: Canada and South Africa": http://:findarticles

Innumerable such references and comments still appear in journals, articles and reports, demonstrating clearly the continuing impact of the comparison. finger-pointing and recrimination. The inferiority-complexed intelligentsia think somehow that the whites of South Africa are children of a lesser God and that the quality of the misdeeds of the Canadian whites who live with a native population that has hardly grown in numbers since the whites arrived and has suffered massacres like that of the Beothuks, does not match the "heinous" nature of the South Africans'. The rhetoric of the Canadian intelligentsia harks back obsessively to the time when the whites ruled in South Africa. While the official and government response to the furore of the Apartheid ambassador showing up the soft Canadian underbelly, was to sweep it under the carpet, *fuggeddaboutid*, so what?, the intelligentsia pored over it, wrote about it and, as usual had no new suggestions to clear the dilemma of either museumising the Indians or bringing them into the mainstream. As I shall describe in my conclusions, the First Nations, despite apologies for "residential schools" and constant handwringing have come nowhere near the mainstream — and let's face it, the First Nations were the mainstream till these lumberiacks appeared. Brian Mulroney, when Prime Minister, used the soft words: "I see the aboriginal peoples making their special contribution to Canadian society as Indian, Inuit and Métis. There is no need to sever one's roots". 26 Rhetorically: where are the Indian provincial governors? Nil. The Governor of Ontario when I was ambassador was a Caribbean. Where are the Canadian Indian Olympic athletes? Where are the Indian diplomats? Special role reserved: Indian dances at the Commonwealth Games.

Beyond academia, the rhetorical deed stirred some interested spirits. A number of senior Indian leaders thought to test the Canadian official condemnation of South Africa. Two delegations visited South Africa in 1985, one comprising Gerald Wuttunee, Eldon Bellegarde and Lyndsay Cyr — all chiefs from the Assembly of First Nations — and a later group with which I was not involved. The delegation saw Soweto, interviewed Development Corporations for the TBVC countries, and visited Bophutatswana. This is not what they expected, though they were careful with their words. The Canadian Embassy hid their light under a bushel. What was apparent from my conversations with the chiefs was that they realised they were part of a larger scheme of universal things in the world — development next to underdevelopment, central planning next to free enterprise and ethnic groups in competition.

[.]com/articles/mi_7080/is 70/is 5788.

²⁶ First Ministers' Conference on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples (1985).



Chiefs Gerald Wuttunee, Lyndsay Cyr and Eldon Bellegarde with Foreign Minister Pik Botha

The collective conscience of the Canadian Indians absorbed the reciprocal rhetorical deeds of mutual visits with a certain pensiveness. Thus, although there was no great diplomatic spin-off from the visit to the Peguis Indian Band except for some squirming in official and Departmental circles and some *schadenfreude* in South Africa, when the great proponent of the "rainbow nation", the Right Reverend Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of Cape Town, long thereafter (three years) sought to meet the First Nations on his visit to Canada in 1990, Canadian Indian hierarchy refused to see him. Memories are long.



 $^{^{\}rm 27}$ Illustration by kind permission - David Anderson, The Star (Johannesburg: 14 August 1990).

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In the dark days of sanctions, the rhetorical-diplomatic deed caused a guffaw at the expense of the pious Canadians. A moment of comic relief carried on into my appointment as Head of the African Division as South African whites savoured the embarrassment of a major critic.



"White man speak with forked tongue"

Babb's visit a publicist's dream come true

ALAN DURN, Preserts News Foreign Service, reports from Winnigen, Canada

A CANALHAN loatest chief's entirement of his country's news media by inviting the South African aminusador to use his reserve his poid off handwinely with wide coverage here.

Chief Louis Sevention and his band of Peguis Indians fell under the spotlight of 18 television stations across Canada, na-tional radio networks, and many

spers. bassador Gienn Baisb's visit to the

The Toronto Star appeared on Wed-ay with its own exemination of an its reserve at Rapid Lake, Quebec, paring it to a correspondent's view of chares in a South African houndhad Dennikan in KwaNdebele, about These reports ran strongly with one on Mr. Babb's was: "Chief Louis Stevenson half up the draw of the property in the state of the stat



South African ambassador Glenn Babb talks with Peguis Chief Louis Stovenson.

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Indian thank largely condemned that Stevenson's next, of receiving a South Af-rican official, bu, admitted that it had drawn attention to possing Indian issues.

²⁸ Illustration by kind permission - Marlene, *Pretoria News* (13 March 1987).



The equation of the diplomatic-rhetorical deed or the aftermathematics

Whereas the flutter in the dovecote of Canadian-South African relations impacted on the psyche of the two countries and resulted indubitably in an augmented consciousness of Canada and its political élite that the flaws in Canadian society would lead to constant criticism internationally, the rhetorical deed faded before the momentous tsunami of the new South African politics. In 1990, President de Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC and the freeing of Mandela, all that I had said to Canadians about change which they should have been encouraging, not sanctioning, and which the Left-wing would not believe, came true. As the Groote Schuur Agreement reached finality and the CODESA talks progressed, as the elections of 1994 took place peacefully, there was no longer a need for the whites to point political fingers. The South African whites could now adopt the moral high ground. The Canadians, Australians and sub-continent Indians could assume the role of juvenile delinquents.

Ironically, this crossing over between the two countries in their internal race relations left the Canadians in the same morass they were in before: nothing changed for the Indians in Canada and everything has changed for the blacks in South Africa. With no target for their barbs, the

²⁹ Illustration by kind permission - Frans Esterhuyse, *Hoofstad* (Pretoria: 19 March 1987).

Canadian intelligentsia hugs itself in a time-warp and refers incessantly and obsessively to that delicious time when South Africa presented them with an ideal target for their reproofs and a time when comparisons could deliberately be odious. This is so even though the Canadian government willingly set up their own reserves as an example for the Tomlinson Commission to follow.

The visit to the Peguis Indian Band remains the reference point for these commentators on race in Canada and the academics, journalists and writers are *still* miffed that it was a South African Apartheid representative that brought the world's attention to the issue. The issue nevertheless stays on the periphery of the Canadian reality and the authorities have *still* to decide whether museumising Indians is less irritating than robustly bringing them into the centre of Canadian culture. It *still* seems that Mulroney's "making their special contribution to Canadian society as Indian, Inuit and *Métis*" is their future. It seems like a no-hoper to judge by the past — they have not worked out this equation.

The ex-Dominions and India are in the unenviable position of facing a world with independent "Human Rights" Commissions and organisations which will continue to up the ante in the stakes of the protection of minority peoples. While South Africa has comfortably leapt the hurdle into an acceptable world of unity in diversity, Canada, Australia and India have still to overcome their internal contradictions. Meanwhile, *harijan* continue to be killed for drinking from the same water source as other castes³⁰ and Australian and Canadian aboriginals continue to suffer alienation and unintended deprivation. They can no longer hide behind the horrors of Apartheid and must face their demons themselves.

The Author: Glenn Babb is a South African Ambassador and a former Deputy Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

 $^{^{30}}$ See "Indian 'untouchable' lynched", *The Cape Times* (7 June 2012).

The future of the world

Luis D. Mendiola

On 13 October 2007 — coinciding with the Islamic occasion of *Eid el Fitr*, the end of the religious month of Ramadan — the *Open letter and call to Muslim religious leaders*, addressed to the Pope and other leaders of Christian denominations, was published. The title of the document was *A common word between us and you* and its publication echoed in the European and North American media, giving rise to comments and analyses by the main leaders.

The introduction starts by stating that "Muslims and Christians together make up over half the world's population and that without peace and justice between the two religious communities there can be no meaningful peace in the world". The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians.

The text sustains that the basis for this peace and understanding already exists, as it is a part of the foundational principles of both faiths, namely: love of One God and love of the neighbour. These principles, it points out, "are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour", it reiterates, "is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity". It states that in the Qur'an God orders the Muslims to issue to both Christians and Jews — the "People of the Scripture" — the following call:

Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).¹

The main body of the letter is made up of two parts. The first is titled *Love of God*, which in turn is divided in two sections: *In Islam* and *The First and greatest Commandment in the Bible*. The first section — with citations from the Qur'an — is a text of a theological, doctrinal and ethical nature. In brief, *The First and Greatest Commandment in the Bible* attempts — with the comparison — to explore the similarities through citations from both the New

¹ Sura 3, verse 64.

[©] African Yearbook of Rhetoric 3, 3, 2012, ISSN 2220-2188, ISBN 978-0-9870334-2-0: Luis D. Mendiola, "The future of the world", pp. 21-28.

and Old Testaments.

The second part, *Love of the Neighbour*, describes its sense in Islam and then in Christianity, both with citations. The text concludes with a third part titled: *Come to a common word between us and you.* It clarifies that there are differences between both denominations, but that the bases of the common ground are already asserted, and include in the community of principles not only the New Testament but also the Torah. The text presents a study that undoubtedly deserves to be explored in more depth, by us and by them. Let us have a look at who it is addressed to and by whom it is signed.

The Pope heads the list of recipients, as he is the temporal head of the Catholic Church, seen as the most numerous and influential. It also addresses leaders of Eastern Churches — both the Orthodox and the Catholic of the Eastern Rite — for example, the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria and All Africa, of Antioch and All the East, of the Holy City of Jerusalem, of Moscow and All of Russia, among others. It is addressed also to leaders of other Christian Churches, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America and the President of the Lutheran World Federation, the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council, the President of the Baptist World Alliance, the Secretary General of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches and "leaders of Christian Churches, everywhere".

The level of recipients was representative but incomplete, given the great number of existing denominations, especially — but not only — in the United States of America. The general criterion seems to have been in favour of the Churches rooted in time and in tradition. Nevertheless, the criterion that prevailed was inclusive rather than exclusive.

More notable is the variety of origin, status, representativeness, professions, *etc.* among the signatories of the letter. Among them are signatories of 40 nationalities, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, India, Indonesia, Yemen, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iraq, Palestine, Nigeria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Lebanon and Kosovo. They are of different professions and varied status with regard to their degree of influence within their own communities. This heterogeneity should be of no surprise. In fact, the Christian Churches — each in their own way — maintain their hierarchies, whereas the Islamic communities — despite the existence of higher levels — did not undergo a notable concentration regarding their hierarchical unity.

Let us look at a few cases among the principal leaders of the main Islamic countries of several continents: member of the Committee of Senior Ulamas (scholars) of Saudi Arabia; Mufti (judge) of Istanbul, Turkey; Grand Judge and Head of Ulema of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Dean of the

Department of Islamic Studies, The Academy of Sciences of Iran; Grand Mufti of Russia; Minister of Religious Affairs of Algeria; Grand Mufti of the Republic of Syria; Chief Islamic Justice of Jordan; Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC); Grand Mufti of the Republic of Egypt; Secretary General of the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, Saudi Arabia; founder of the Ulema Organisation of Iraq; Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Jordan; Imam of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, and many other professors, scholars, prestigious officials, members of religious orders, judges, politicians. The total number of original signatories was 138 and by the end of 2007 they were more than 200.

It took three years of work to come together in this common text signed by so many representatives. The work was extremely meticulous, having to save complex cultural, linguistic, doctrinal and theological differences — all this within a context of relative political urgency, so to speak, due to the growing tension from 2001 onward.

The text was published by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, with the direct intervention of its director, Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad — member of the Royal Family of Jordan — who for the three years (and more years before) devoted himself to the difficult task of reaching a consensus of common ideas and texts. One of the most complex matters lay in the question: who is Muslim? Who has the right to assume authority and issue legal regulations (the famous *fatwas*)? Is it allowed to assume the authority to declare someone apostate (*takfir*)? And other hardly less preliminary questions.

Such an effort, one that brings together members of various Churches and denominations generically named Christian in order to agree on a document of basic coincidences addressed to another denomination — whichever it is — has not yet been done. There are those of each Church (the Catholic, the Protestants), but not one that brings several of them together.

This document is an invitation to a theological dialogue — the first — and to a communion of criteria in the development of faith with Muslims.

Let us consider the text. The title itself should be given emphasis, as it is inspired by a *sura*, verse 64: a common word. Historically — and it is convenient here to go deeper into the history of Islam than thus far — the context of that common word is related to the visit of a delegation of Christians to Mohammed, near the end of his days. There they were exhorted to worship only God, as well as not to worship any other gods. It is a manifesto of absolute monotheism.

The document strives to avoid controversy, unlike the age-old disputes between them. Some may be of the opinion that trying to assume points of agreement is beyond reasonable. Nevertheless, this document is a kind of new beginning, a new starting point. Some have already stated this

opinion. The main sense is that of response, urgency, necessity, a common voice — at least among all or a substantial majority of Muslims — regarding what they understand to be essential about their own faith, in order to counteract — among themselves — extremists that preach violence, hate and intolerance.

We must remember that the Council Fathers of Vatican II, celebrated over 40 years ago, exhorted parishioners to acknowledge, conserve and promote the good things — spiritual and moral — as well as the sociocultural values found in the followers of other religions, through dialogue and cooperation. Since then the dialogue between Christians and Muslims has developed with intermittence, with back and forths. The novelty in all of it, the lack of structures, as they existed or were created with other denominations, the main political advances — particularly in the Middle East — have lead to the effort not being maintained constantly. Hence the value of this letter.

The most well-known response was that of Pope Benedict XVI — through the intermediary of the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone — addressed to Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, President of the Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought. It says:

His Holiness the Pope has asked me to convey his gratitude to Your Royal Highness, and to all those that signed the letter. He would like to express, furthermore, his deep appreciation for this gesture, for the positive spirit that inspired the text and for the call for a common effort to promote peace in the world. Without ignoring or downplaying our differences as Christians and Muslims, we can and therefore should pay attention to what unites us; namely, faith in the one God, the provident Creator and universal Judge who at the end of time will consider each person according to his or her actions. His Holiness was particularly impressed by the attention given in the letter to the twofold commandment to love of God and of man. As you may know, at the beginning of his Pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI stated: 'I am profoundly convinced that we must not yield to the negative pressures in our midst, but must affirm the values of mutual respect, solidarity and peace. The life of every human being is sacred, both for Christians and for Muslims. There is plenty of scope for us to act together in the service of fundamental moral values... Such common ground allows us to base dialogue on effective respect for the dignity of every human person, on objective knowledge of the religion of the other, on the sharing of religious experience and, finally, on common commitment to promoting mutual respect and acceptance among the younger generation. The Pope is confident that, once this is achieved, it will be possible to cooperate in a productive way in the areas of culture and society, and for the promotion of justice and peace in a society and throughout the world. With a view to encouraging your praiseworthy initiative, I am pleased to communicate that His Holiness would be most willing to receive Your Royal Highness and a restricted group of signatories of the *Open Letter*, chosen by you. At the same time, a working meeting could be organised between your delegation and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, with the cooperation of some specialised Pontifical Institutes (such as the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies and the Pontifical Gregorian University).

It is worth bearing in mind the exceptional nature of this invitation by the Pope.

It is interesting to see some of the considerations by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, who presides over the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. He described the document as significant, among other things, because it is signed by both Sunni and Shiite personalities and because of the use of parallel expressions from the Bible and the Qur'an, both of which are unusual.

For the Cardinal, the Holy See's response represents progress in the relations between the Catholic Church and the Islamic world on a new basis, although it should not be seen by the Catholics as a Copernican revolution, he says.

Tauran anticipates that which could become the contents of a fruitful dialogue with Islam. He says that beyond the strictly theological dialogue — which has not yet begun and which undoubtedly presents many difficulties — he believes that the dialogue of cultures and charity and the dialogue about spirituality can be very fruitful. Together with Islam we can certainly contribute to the safeguard of some values such as the sacredness of human life, the dignity of family and the promotion of peace. It is essential to start getting to know each other. We, Christians and Muslims, always have something to learn from each other.

He brings up some examples of learning: we can appreciate in them, he says, the dimension of the importance of God and faith itself in public life. From us, on the other hand, Muslims can learn the value of a healthy laicism.

The Cardinal adds that there are still distances with regard to religious rights and freedom, where there are notable differences. But above all, he believes there is hope to continue from now on with a fruitful dialogue on this particular subject, as the open process includes mutual trust between the parties. It will contribute at least, Tauran insists, to the debate on this topic, although it will without a doubt be a long process. The Church itself, with the Council's document *Dignitatis Humanae*, has rediscovered the principle that no person can be forced to practice or not practice a religion.

The desire and augury is for Islam to also rediscover this principle.

For the director of the Cambridge Interfaith Programme of the University of Cambridge, Professor David Ford, the significance of the document lies in that it is based on three main reasons:

First, it is unprecedented in bringing together so many of the leading religious authorities and scholars of Islam and uniting them in a positive, substantial affirmation. This is an astonishing achievement of solidarity, one that can be built on in the future.

Second, it is addressed to Christians in the form of a friendly word, it engages respectfully and carefully with the Christian scriptures, and it finds common ground in what Jesus himself said is central: love of God and love of neighbour. I like its modesty — it does not claim to be the final word but to be 'a common word', one that Muslims and Christians... can share with integrity. This is shared ground, mutual ground, where there is the possibility of working further on issues that unite and divide us. This common word does not pretend that there are no differences between Muslims and Christians (for example, on the Christian teaching about Jesus rather than the teaching of Jesus).

Third, it opens a way forward that is more hopeful for the world than most others at present in the public sphere. Its combination of Islamic solidarity around core teaching together with friendly address to Christians should be seen as setting a direction for the twenty-first century. It challenges Muslims and Christians to live up to their own teachings and seek political and educational as well as personal ways to do this for the sake of the common good. It invites them to go deeper into their own faith at the same time as going deeper into each other's.

Ford adds that any long-term solution will have to include four elements:

- 1. Muslim solidarity around an understanding of their faith that clearly excludes violent, uncompassionate acts, programmes and language.
- 2. A better Christian understanding of Islam.
- 3. A deeper engagement between Muslims and Christians that makes use of the resources at the heart of their faith, such as their scriptures.
- 4. A concern for the flourishing of the whole human family and the whole planet.

It is worth highlighting the Conference on 15 November 2007, by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations — from the University of Notre Dame (United States of America) — titled: *Catholicism and Islam. Points of convergence and divergence, encounter and cooperation.* Among his ideas he mentions citations by theologian Hans Küng, starting by the famous slogan: "No world peace without religious peace", and the more recent one taken from the monumental *Islam, past, present and future* that says:

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions.²

Migliore adds that the then Cardinal Ratzinger, a year before being elected as Pope — in a conference commemorating the 60^{th} anniversary of D-Day (6 June 1944) — referred to Küng's statement saying:

Modifying a statement of Hans Küng, I would say that without true peace between reason and faith there can't be peace at the world level, because without peace between reason and religion, the very sources of morals and the rule of law dry out.

Lastly, it is worth adding another citation — used by Archbishop Migliore — of Lybian theologian Aref Ali Nayed, chief spokesperson on behalf of the *Open Letter*, as expressed to the Catholic News Service. He says:

The dialogue, or rather, set of dialogues, we hope *A common word* will initiate are multifaceted, multilayered, multidisciplinary, and multilateral. It is more a set or matrix of polyphonic discourses that are united through their exclusive focus: loving worship of the One God, and Love of our neighbours. The matrix includes theological, spiritual, scriptural, juridical, and ethical discourses. It is to be conducted in cooperation with a broad range of partners from all active Christian Churches and denominations including the Catholic, Protestant (both traditional and evangelical), and the Orthodox communities. The discourses will be with Church leaders, centres of theological studies, spiritual communities, scriptural reasoning and reading groups, and grassroots organisations.

² Hans Küng, *Islam, past, present and future* (Oxford: One World, 2007).

An arduous task is ahead for those parties that are able to become involved — a task that cannot be tackled without an essential good faith that will gradually consolidate mutual trust. It takes wisdom and another equally important understanding: courage.

(Translated by Clara Tilve)

The Author: Luis D. Mendiola is an Argentine Ambassador and a Senior Fellow at the Argentine Council for Foreign Relation (CARI), Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"Diplology", or diplomatic rhetoric: A case study regarding Iraq

Philippe-Joseph Salazar

In his study on the pragmatics of diplomatic discourse, Constanze Villar declares that "Diplomatic discourse enjoys a poor reputation: it is called banal and euphemistic, clichéd or mendacious". The study then continues with a dismantling exercise to illustrate how what is considered to be a lie is, in actual fact, a series of rhetorical techniques of ambiguity. In my *Hyperpolitique*, I have analysed diplomatic speech used by the executive power (and not career diplomats) as being the implementation of three hyperdiplomatic means of persuasion (the colossus, glory and the totem). Cases do exist where, in the hands of an ambitious or zealous diplomat, the desire for "hyper-diplomacy" results in an effective lie. Such is the subject of the following analysis.

In 2010 a junior French ambassador to Iraq gave an interview to French daily *Le Figaro* in which he developed a forcefully argued diplomatic narrative on Iraq as a "laboratory for democracy" in the region.³

I shall now undertake a rhetorical decoding of that interview which, intended as it was for a wide public and through a public medium — something fairly rare for a diplomat stationed abroad — is thus part of an exercise in public diplomacy, in other words propaganda. The North-South dimension, furthermore, should not be overlooked: this too is an ostentatious effort to affirm that the analytical discourse of a Western diplomat is superior, persuasively (in its argumentation) and materially (in its desired effects), to the locally produced explanations. The desired effect is therefore one of hegemony.

The form it takes is that of an interview composed of questions and answers.

¹ Constanze Villar, *Le discours diplomatique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006). Quotation from "Pour une théorie du discours diplomatique", *Annuaire français de relations internationales* VI (2005): 45.

² Philippe-Joseph Salazar, *L'Hyperpolitique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2009).

³ Interview with the then French ambassador to Iraq Mr B. Boillon, "L'Irak, laboratoire de la démocratie du monde arabe", *Le Figaro* (30 August 2010): http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2010/08/30/01003-20100830ARTFIG00616-l-irak-laboratoire-de-la-démocratie-du-monde-arabe.php.

[©] African Yearbook of Rhetoric 3, 3, 2012, ISSN 2220-2188, ISBN 978-0-9870334-2-0: Philippe-Joseph Salazar, ""Dipology"... A case study regarding Iraq", pp. 29-36.

1st Decoding: Setting up a diplomatic sophism

Question: "The Americans are leaving Iraq. Is that good news?"

Answer: "Yes, for several reasons. Firstly, adherence to the agreement struck between the Americans and the Iraqis proves that things are playing out as anticipated. Secondly, because the American soldiers' departure removes the terrorists' main argument, namely foreign occupation. Moreover, the withdrawal allows the Iraqi security forces, which over the last two years have become increasingly powerful, to assume greater responsibility. There were many who considered that civil war was inevitable. It never happened. And lastly, the United States and Iraq will be able to renew their relations starting off on a new basis. All the parties are pleased about the withdrawal. Not a single Iraqi leader has asked for it to be postponed, as that would mean political suicide".

Decoding

This is a sophism in three parts:

"Firstly etc.": Adherence to the agreement does not prove that everything took place "as anticipated", since the argument is tautological: Mr Obama began withdrawing troops for reasons which are also — and, some would say, mainly — related to domestic policy, and which have nothing to do with an external timetable. The ambassador is thus confusing motive with intention. Because it is, in fact, the withdrawal (for domestic reasons) which gives substance to this stated agreement and which therefore endorses the intention, and not the other way round.

"Secondly etc.": At the time the withdrawal had just begun and, as long as 50 000 combat or support troops remain (this category excluded an anticipated 7 000 private security troops, housed in five "fortresses" and employed by the American Foreign Affairs or State Department), and also taking into consideration two enormous consulates built at a cost of \$1 billion, the air force being strengthened with a surveillance and destruction capability, plus over one thousand armoured vehicles and a whole armada controlled by the Americans, one doubts that the population would have had an obvious sense of an end to the occupation, despite its having become a protective "presence" managed by said State Department and, of course, the secret services. One doubts that this was the reason for fewer attacks.

"And lastly *etc.*": The "new basis" the diplomat is referring to, consists of his first two points which have become surreptitiously facts but which, as I have just shown, are and remain fallacies.

To these false logical proofs the ambassador adds a proof which is rhetorically called "ethical": the Iraqis are "pleased". Indeed, at one point even the Vichy Militiamen had had enough of the Germans telling them how to torture their compatriots; they wanted to "be pleased" by doing it in the French manner. In short, this first paragraph takes the form of a sophisticated syllogism: a) since the Americans and the Iraqis (But who, in fact, are "the Iraqis"? The Shiites, the Sunnis, the Kurds? Another masked fallacy of definition.) are adhering to their agreement, and b) since the American occupation is over, c) therefore a respectable element remains, the "parties which are pleased". Quite, that is exactly how things are when viewed through the lense of a sophism.

The first rhetorical technique then consists in a fallacious syllogism structured in three steps, each step being fabricated on the basis of a fallacy. Yet, in the flow of the interview, it sounds acceptable, common sense even, except that the journalist asks the next question.

2nd Decoding: Setting up realistic effects

Question: "And yet, the violence continues".

Answer: "Since August 2009, spectacular and co-ordinated attacks indicative of al-Qaida have indeed taken place. These attacks have targeted symbols of Iraqi or international power and generally involve ethnically or religiously mixed areas. But the violence is limited to Baghdad and its surrounds, and to border areas such as Mosul or Kirkuk. Al-Qaida's tactics, which aim to tear apart the country and rekindle civil war, have failed. The threat of Iraq being partitioned is behind us. Confessionalism does not feature in any political programme. As for the rest, and contrary to what one reads everywhere, security has not deteriorated. On the contrary, the situation has improved because, instead of one hundred deaths per day four years ago, today we have about ten. In fact, the trend was reversed from the time the American troops began leaving the cities, in June 2009. With their final withdrawal, this trend should continue and stabilise".

Decoding

This reply constitutes a second rhetorical setting-up because, when answering a question, it is often advisable to refer to chronology, add key

images and introduce figures. This technique aims to create an effect of reality: dates create a tangible effect of time bound reality, while images anchor dates in one's imagination, and we know the "truthfulness" effect of stats and figures.

Thus, the ambassador informs us, in "2009" the horrifying attacks were "spectacular" and "limited". Let us decode this statement, again in three steps:

- Firstly, the epithet "spectacular" in no way diminishes the atrocity
 of the massacres: a massacre which is, moreover, spectacular is
 thus a massacre which makes an even greater impact and not a
 lesser one. I would have advised him to say: "invented to impress
 the media".
- 2. Secondly, "Kirkuk": this city is more than just a "limited" area, it is the oil trove of Kurdistan protected by the American army along the length of a demarcation line (or Green Line) made secure by them, who have thus created within Kurdistan itself under their protection an effectively "limited" area, though not for the reason suggested (i.e. where the violence is "contained") but in the sense that they, the Americans, have exclusive rights to it. "Limited" would seem to indicate a diminished tension, in the same way as one would say a fire is limited or contained, whereas the exact opposite applies: because this area is so coveted, it was placed under the control of ("limited to") the Americans.

In both cases, the rhetorical technique employed is to proffer a strong word which conjures up an image used to signify the opposite of reality.

3. What about "spectre of partition"? One has to appreciate the irony of the clause "spectre is behind us" whereas the reality is placed before our eyes (*sub oculos subjecta*, as it is called in rhetoric): all intelligence sources agreed that Kurdistan would be the next area of "partition". The ambassador, speaking about al-Qaeda and intimating a partition along religious lines, which has become "a spectre", is diverting attention from the real territorial issue, which is Kirkuk. And perhaps he should also be reminded that the distinctive feature of a spectre is to appear before us so as to frighten us and not behind us, where nobody sees it.

His conclusion, following on the heels of an iconic figure, "about ten": the "trend has been reversed". But 57 killed in August 2010 in an audacious

attack on a recruitment centre and 60 more in remarkably co-ordinated attacks against police stations, with what some have called "the worst attacks" taking place in May, is that consistent with a trend which is being reversed? "Trend" conjures up an image and obscures reality.

One understands the rhetorical setting-up — the use of word images to skew reality — but what is its mechanism? The mechanism is word positioning, because it is difficult for a journalist, even if he or she is not obsequious, to reply and correct each time. On-line comments would take care of a rebuttal, as they often do, but unfortunately they are stochastic, argued in no particular order and without a binding purpose: in a blog or page of comments, the person who posts the final word is the authority, for five seconds, before one proceeds to read or post the next comment.

Whence the peremptory conclusion which, in practical terms, is irrefutable, but is quite simply a fable, a fiction or a scenario (in rhetoric "fictio" is translated as "scenario", and is itself the Latin rendition of classical Greek *plasma*). The ambassador speaks in plastic terms.

3rd Decoding: How to create an "obvious" interpretation

Question: "Does the fact that a government has yet to emerge from the last elections not create a political vacuum?"

Answer: "Yet another misconception! In Iraq, there is a government that governs, and governs well, as well as an elected Parliament. One should not complain: in Iraq we have political forces which have been in discussion for five months, whereas three years ago political issues were being settled with weapons... And when one sees what is happening in Italy or Belgium, is Europe really in a position to teach lessons? Today in Iraq we are seeing a non-violent struggle for access to political power. The blockage is linked to issues of persons and not to religious differences. The fact that no consensus has emerged regarding a head of government proves that the political game is being played out in Iraq alone and that no neighbouring country is able to impose its choice on Iraqi politics. At the risk of restating the obvious, it needs to be repeated that the last elections were a victory for democracy. There are very few other countries in the region where the results are not known before the vote takes place...".

Decoding

Another rhetorical technique is to fabricate an "obvious" interpretation, without using any figures or having recourse to "facts". He even oversteps the margin by jokingly referring to two neighbouring European Union countries.

As in intelligence, there are those who collect and those who analyse. He analyses, in two steps:

- 1. "Misconception". The true idea here is thus that Iraq is being governed, just as are Belgium and Italy, the object of his witticism (after all, are they not under American occupation?) The use of analogy (a is more or less like b, and b like c, therefore etc.) is a technique of interpretation used to divert us and put us off the scent. But, in real terms, the basis of this analogy is false: Mr Obama's security adviser had just put out a reminder that it was "urgent" to form a government, and the general responsible for training the military security troops had pointed out that the great danger of too visible an American withdrawal of its troops (but excluding the massive support and private security under Mrs Clinton's control) was that the Iraqi generals might "become involved in politics".
- 2. "Political game". The extensive and generally recognised lack of stability is redefined as a "game" and the rhetorical trap here is the use of an amphibology referring to the meaning of "game". Let us remind ourselves that a game exists if there is a game board and recognised rules are extant; a real game (a match) exists because there is an abstract game which presupposes it: in this case, a stable agreement on the nature of the politics. Game, or play, also exists when proper adjustment is not made during the assembly of a machine, resulting in a play on the wheel in its cogwheel for instance, leading to a probable accident. So the absence of an agreement between the two main parties is presented not as a structural problem of the "game" (first meaning) put in place by the Americans and the supervised elections, but as "play" (second meaning) between "persons", with failure guaranteed. On that basis, which "democracy" cannot be interpreted in this manner? The difference is that in Belgium or Italy the game (the rules) is well-established and "play" in the machinery is effectively possible yet constrained. By contrast in Iraq, the game (the rules) is constantly being revised, and everything works as "play" (constant adjustment). In short, the ambassador uses a metaphor in order to misrepresent and to mislead.

We are dealing here with the fabrication of a false interpretation which, like La Fontaine's jay adorning itself in peacock plumes, waves before our eyes illusions of proof which it does not possess. Such truth is no truth at all but

merely a fabrication based on analogical thinking and a play on words.

4th Decoding: Diplology

Question: "And finally, has the war been won in Iraq?"

Answer: "Of course the Iraqis say that the 2003 allied intervention came at a high cost in human lives and with the destruction of infrastructure, but they also remember that it freed the country. The results are thus both positive and negative. Iraqis appreciate the fruits of democratisation: the freeing up of the press, the emergence of civil society, free expression by the political parties and the exemplary nature of the elections. These are all facts. When speaking about Iraq, it is imperative to reason without any given ideology. Iraq is the true laboratory of democracy in the Arab world. This is where the future of democracy in the region is playing out. Iraq can potentially become a political model for its neighbours".

Decoding

One must appreciate, first of all, the endorsement given by the representative of France in Iraq to the American-British invasion (condemned by France): is he expressing the thinking on Iraq of the then French government? Furthermore, note the misleading use of the epithet "allied" which, in everyday French and in a context such as this, refers to the Allies in the World Wars: using the adjective enables him to skirt around the French absence from this alliance and to become associated with it, all in the same breath. This technique is akin to the win-win technique used by salespersons.

One notes next a rhetorical balancing act between the price paid in human lives (the accepted average estimate is 100 000 dead) and what this price paid in blood has bought: "the freeing up of the press and free expression". A strange trade-off which offends one's conscience but, more important, is a type of sleight of hand, which is even more serious, since the ambassador, transformed here into a ventriloquist, imputes this to the "Iraqis" and no longer to himself. From being a spokesman for his government, he also becomes that of the "Iraqis". One could quote a thousand counter-declarations and ask him: "To which 'Iraqis' are you referring and how can you be their representative?"

In short, "These are all facts". Actually, they are not "the facts" but reality effects. But whoever criticises this rhetorical montage and exposes the fallacy, is accused of being engaged in "ideology". And yet, immediately afterwards, the ambassador himself engages in ideology by declaring *ex officio* that Iraq is "the true laboratory of democracy in the Arab world".

Therefore it follows that a "false" laboratory exists in the "Arab world?" Now, in 2010, which one would that be: Morocco? Antevernal Tunisia?⁴ The expression is borrowed from a stock used in French political science, permutations on a core *topos*, "France, laboratory of democracy in the 19th Century" and more recently used in the case of "Benin, laboratory of democracy". What is important however is the diplomatic description of 100 000 local dead, 4 000 soldiers lost and 35 000 American injured as a "model" — setting aside other "laboratories" under construction such as organised rebellion, a proconsulate in the oil-rich region, and, at the time, a civil protectorate heavily armed and managed by the State Department. But, owing to the miracle of the diplomatic word, the country possesses "free expression". Therefore it is a laboratory for democracy since free speech is a pre-condition for democracy.

In sum what is at work in this particular case is what I would term "diplology": a conscious effort to construct rhetorically a diplomatic reality. The case analysed here is striking inasmuch as it highlights how international flashpoints are special sites for deft fallacies, and how diplomacy "from the North" is particularly savvy at it. 5

(Translated by Bas M. Angelis)

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⁴ Two standard references of "democracy" in the eyes of their former colonial power, even before the so-called "Arab Spring".

⁵ On diplomacy and language invention see my Introduction to "The rhetorical shape of international conflicts", special issue of *Javnost-The Public* 12, 4 (2005): 5-10.

Rhetorical strategies across borders: The case of Brazil (1964) and Argentina (1966 and 1976)

María Alejandra Vitale

This study compares the rhetorical strategies used by the Brazilian press in 1964 and by the Argentine press in 1966 and 1976 to legitimize the dictatorial governments inaugurated in those years. Starting from proposals by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, It argues that similar rhetorical strategies underpinned the diplomacy of both countries — a *soft power* diplomacy that aimed to make military regimes in the Southern Cone acceptable to the international community.²

On 31 March 1964, Brazil's constitutional president, João Goulart, a disciple of Gertulio Vargas and a promoter of pro-worker policies, was overthrown in a military-led coup sponsored by the United States of America's government under President Lyndon B. Johnson.³ The coup was supported by Brazil's upper and middle classes as well as by the country's right-wing political hardliners. On 28 June 1966, Argentina's constitutional president, Arturo Illia, of the Radical People's Party, was similarly overthrown by the Argentine military with the support of the Peronist movement and several leaders of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) as well as a number of employers' federations.⁴

Finally, on 24 March 1976, the Argentine military — with the backing of most of the population — overthrew "Isabel" Perón, who had come to power as Vice-President after the death of her husband, President Juan Domingo Perón, on 1 July 1974.⁵

During the twentieth century, bilateral relations between Brazil and

¹ Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation*, John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver, trans. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971).

² Joseph Nye Jr. defines *soft power* as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments, It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies". Nye adds: "When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes the others, our soft power is enhanced". See Joseph Nye Jr., *Soft power: The means to success in world politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004).

³ On the overthrow of João Goulart, see Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura A ditadura envergonhada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002).

⁴ For an account of the coup against Arturo Illia, see Eugenio Kvaternik, *El péndulo cívico-militar. La caída de Illia* (Buenos Aires: Tesis, 1990).

⁵ For an account of the coup of March 24, 1976, see Marcos Novaro and Vicente Palermo, *La dictadura militar 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2003).

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Argentina alternated between conflict and agreement, competition and a tendency toward integration. However, these military coups occurred at moments when diplomatic efforts to create a framework for cooperation between the two countries had already been reactivated. After the breakdown of democracy, the National Security Doctrine, which was hegemonic in the armed forces of both countries, encouraged the search for alliances in order to repress "subversion". Under the National Security Doctrine, the greatest military threat to the Third World was revolutionary war resulting from "communist infiltration", which in practice meant any organised opposition strong enough to challenge government policies. This effectively put internal security on the same footing as national defense against occupation by a foreign army.

Legitimating rhetoric

According to Hannah Arendt, governments never base their power exclusively on violence; they always seek legitimacy in the sense of support and recognition and the right to be obeyed. In this sense, the press, which plays a central role in shaping *doxa* and consensus in modern societies, worked as an ally in building the legitimacy of the military governments of Brazil and Argentina. It appealed to a number of topics which stated that the ousted

⁶ Bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina are analyzed in Mario Rapoport and Amado Luiz Cervo, eds., *El cono sur. Una historia común* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001).

⁷ For more information about the rapprochement between Brazil and Argentina, see Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira, in *Argentina, Brasil y Estados Unidos. De la Triple Alianza al mercosur* (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2004).

⁸ See María José de Rezende, *A ditadura militar no Brasil. Repressão e pretensão de legitimidade 1964-1984* (London: UEL, 2001) and Alicia García, *La doctrina de la Seguridad Nacional/II* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1991). See too Bandeira, *Argentina, Brasil y Estados Unidos:* Chapter 17, and John Dinges, *The Condor years. How Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents* (New York: The New Press, 2004).

⁹ See Hannah Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, 1972).

¹⁰I use the term topics not in the Aristotelian sense of empty forms used to make arguments for any subject, but as ideologemes that belong to the *doxa* and are considered obvious and beyond dispute by a particular social group. See Marc Angenot, "La parole pamphlétaire. Contribution à la typologie des discours modernes", (París: Payot, 1982); Ruth Amossy, *L* ´argumentation dans le discours (París: Armand Colin, 2000); and María Alejandra Vitale, "Memoria y acontecimiento. La prensa escrita argentina ante el golpe militar de 1976", in Patricia Vallejos, ed., *Los estudios del discurso: Nuevos aportes desde la investigación en la Argentina* (Bahía Blanca: Universidad Nacional del Sur, 2007): 165-182.

constitutional governments had not respected democracy or the Constitution and that military rule, by contrast, would restore both of these.

In the case of Brazil, the media felt that President João Goulart sought to destroy representative democracy in order to establish a republic run by Communists and labor unions. 11 In the Argentina of 1966, these topics were formulated more moderately. The Peronist party had been proscribed from electoral competition since 1955, when Juan Domingo Perón was overthrown in a coup. Now, the press accused President Arturo Illia of endangering democracy by allowing a quasi-Peronist candidate to run for Governor of the Province of Mendoza. ¹² In 1976, however, the press was more vigorous. It felt that the government headed by "Isabel" Perón was not a democracy but a demagogy with no power to rein in "subversion". Nevertheless, the military governments led by Marshal Humberto Castelo Branco in Brazil in 1964, and by Generals Juan Carlos Onganía and Jorge Rafael Videla in Argentina in 1966 and 1976, respectively, were presented as respecting democracy.¹³ The Armed Forces' commitment to fighting Communism supposedly quaranteed under the National Security Doctrine, that they were acting to defend democratic institutions because — as is well known — communism was portrayed as an enemy of democracy.

In Brazil, João Goulart's government had programmed a series of reforms that would have benefited the poorer classes, such as granting illiterate people the right to vote, agrarian reform and a new tax policy. Meanwhile, the unions led by Brazil's General Confederation of Labor (CGT) had initiated a period of social mobilisation. The media viewed all this, together with the fact that Goulart was supported by the Communist Party, as a sign of imminent revolution sponsored by "the Kremlin". The media viewed all this, together with the fact that Goulart was supported by the Communist Party, as a sign of imminent revolution sponsored by "the Kremlin".

Guillermo O'Donnell¹⁶ has described the Argentine bourgeoisie's fear

¹¹ See "O expurgo", O Globo (6 April 1964).

¹² On the election results in Mendoza as a trigger of the 1966 military coup, see Alain Rouquié, *Poder militar y sociedad política en la Argentina II* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986), Eugenio Kvaternik, *El péndulo cívico-militar. La caída de Illia* (Buenos Aires: Tesis, 1990) and Catalina Smulovitz, "La eficacia como crítica y utopía. Notas sobre la caída de Illia", *Desarrollo Económico* 13, 131 (1993): 403-423.

¹³ This statement must be qualified in the case of General Juan Carlos Onganía, as the conservative daily *La Nación* and the business-oriented magazine *Análisis* distanced themselves from his corporatist model, which differed from Humberto Castello Branco's liberal model. On the corporatist leanings of Onganía's government, see Marcelo Cavarozzi, *Autoritarismo y democracia* (1955-1983) (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1987).

¹⁴ Boris Fausto and Fernando Devoto, *Brasil e Argentina. Um ensaio de história comparada (1950-2002)* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2004).

¹⁵ O Globo, "A vitória do Brasil traído", 7 April 1964.

¹⁶ See Guillermo O'Donnell, *El Estado burocrático-autoritario 1966-1973* (Buenos Aires: Belgrano, 1982).

of social revolution after Argentina's General Confederation of Labour (CGT) launched its own Action Plan in 1964. The gradual shift by the Peronist unions towards class struggle along with the fact that the first armed group, Uturuncos¹⁷ (rural in nature and influenced by the Cuban revolution) had emerged linked to resistance against the proscription of Peronism, fuelled perceptions that Peronism and Communism were the same threat under different names.

However, as O'Donnell points out, in 1976, when the press and the military began to speak of "subversion", calling for the overthrow of "Isabel" Perón on the grounds that her government was colluding with the Peronist and Marxist guerrillas (principally Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army), the guerrillas had largely been defeated the previous year. ¹⁸

The topic that the military were defending democracy was combined both in Brazil and Argentina with statements denying that the military government was a dictatorship — statements such as "The Brazilian Armed Forces are not asking for a dictatorship", "it was not directed at installing a dictatorship", 20 and "no dictatorship has been created". In Brazil, the press also responded to criticism in the French media that the coup had been orchestrated by the United States. The Brazilian press retorted that this accusation was motivated by rivalry between the French and the Americans for leadership of the non-Communist world and that it was Goulart's government that had been under the control of a foreign power (this time, referring to China). The Brazilian press also brought into question the independence of Goulart's foreign policy, which had prioritised the North-South conflict and relations with non-aligned countries, by implying that his policy responded to the needs of the communist bloc.

The argumentative technique that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca call *dissociation of notions* — and which always involves the splitting of an existing notion into at least two notions — played an important role in relation to the topic already mentioned. The print media in both Brazil and — in 1976 — Argentina dissociated the notion of democracy into 'inauthentic' democracy, present during the administrations of João Goulart and "Isabel" Perón, and 'authentic' democracy, which these countries would soon enjoy thanks to the Armed Forces.

This way of identifying the overthrown government as 'inauthentic' is

¹⁷ See Ernesto Salas, *Uturuncos. El origen de la guerrilla peronista* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2003).

¹⁸ Guillermo O'Donnell, *Ensayos escogidos sobre autoritarismo y democratización* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1997): 182.

¹⁹ "O Episódio da liberação do Brasil", *O Estado do Minas* (5 April 1964).

²⁰ "Modernidad: La cuestión es cómo", *Análisis* (18 July 1966).

²¹ "Estos son los secretos que manejará el presidente sin demagogias ni altisonancias: ante un nuevo estilo", *La Razón* (27 March 1976).

consistent with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca notion of *rhetoric as a process*, which dismisses rhetoric by equating it with the artificial, false and verbal against the natural, true and real. Thus, the press described statements by Goulart, Illia and "Isabel" Perón as rhetoric, while also judging Goulart to be as an uninspiring and mediocre speaker. On the other hand, it praised the language used by Castelo Branco as "dignified, calm, correct" and found "eloquence", "sincerity", "truth" and "sobriety" in General Onganía and an absence of rhetoric together with a similar "sobriety" and "clarity" in General Videla.

To legitimise military rule the print media in Brazil and Argentina also appealed to what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca call the "argument of direction", or slippery-slope argument, which assumes that once things start to go downhill they can only get worse. The press represented both countries as rushing headlong towards an abyss of lawlessness, social breakdown and communism — implying that the military coups had halted this process. 22 This argument was reinforced by the orientational metaphor "up is good/down is bad". 23 Another image much used by the press in both countries was the biological and medical metaphor of disease, which represented the armed forces as physicians and surgeons performing resections or surgery to heal the social body. This tended to publicly legitimise the repression the military practiced in secret and simultaneously masked and exposed a way of doing biopolitics — what Foucault calls, "the concrete ways in which power penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life". 24

Finally, it is interesting to consider how the Brazilian and Argentine media attempted to exonerate the Armed Forces by refusing to name the military as the real perpetrators of the coups and by toning down the negative connotations of a military takeover. This strategy found linguistic expression in what Argentine linguist Beatriz Lavandera calls "assertion softeners", that is, forms that allow speakers to express themselves vaguely and take for

²² For example, Brazil's largest newspaper, *O Globo*, stated: "Only now, after the expulsion of the President of the Republic who was mainstreamed, if not integrated into a Communist "plot", the nation realizes how close it was to rolling into the abyss that he had prepared" (6 April 1964). Argentina's largest newspaper, *Clarín*, referred in an editorial to Illia's government as "a government incomprehensibly determined to move towards the abyss" (3 July 1966). On the use of this metaphor, see María Alejandra Vitale, "Prensa escrita y autoritarismo. El tópico de la caída hacia el abismo (1930-1976)", *Páginas de Guarda. Revista de edición, lenguaje y cultura escrita* 4 (2007): 47-62.

²³ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* (University of Chicago Press. 1980).

²⁴ See Giorgo Agamben, *Homo sacer. Sovereign power and bare life* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press: 1998): 5.

granted what is left implicit.²⁵ Linguistic resources used to soften assertions included intransitive verbs, as in "Joao Goulart finally *fell* victim to his insincerity and his policy of deception"²⁶ and "Arturo Illia and his committee *fell* because with them the old Argentina was dying of exhaustion and inefficiency",²⁷ where the intransitive verb 'fall' constructed the coup as involving only the governments themselves without mentioning the military's role in their downfall. Impersonal and passive voice constructions²⁸ were likewise used to hide the identity of those responsible for potentially reprehensible actions, as in "*There was* no bloodshed",²⁹ "Congress *was closed*"³⁰ and "João Goulart's Government *was deposed*"³¹. Nominalisations³² played a similar role, as in "the overthrow of the former President"³³ and "the new alteration of the constitutional regime",³⁴ where the Armed Forces who did the overthrowing and altering are not mentioned.

This strategy of exoneration was supported by the use of alethic modality indicating logical necessity. This was used by both the Brazilian and the Argentine press to "de-historicise" the military coups as inevitable events that were bound to happen. It was reinforced by the repeated use of clichés, such as "Communist infiltration" and "Christian and democratic institutions" (in Brazil) or "communist infiltration" and "Western Christian civilization" (in Argentina). These catchphrases summarized a topic of the National Security Doctrine, namely that Christianity prevented the spread of Communism — an ideology depicted not only as undemocratic but also as anti-Christian. This

²⁵ See Beatriz Lavandera, "Decir y aludir. Una propuesta metodológica", *Revista de Filología* 2 (1985): 21-31.

²⁶ "Passado", *O Jornal do Brasil* (2 April 1964).

²⁷ *Extra* (August 1966).

²⁸ Although the passive voice exists in Spanish, it is less frequently used than in English. Instead, a reflexive verb construct, formed by se + the third person singular or plural conjugation of a verb, is preferred for expressing impersonality. This construct also exists in Portuguese although it has not displaced the passive voice to the same extent as in Spanish.

²⁹ Editorial, *La Nación* (29 June 1966).

³⁰ See "La City", *Mercado* (1 April 1976).

³¹ Editorial, *O Jornal do Brasil* (3 April 1964).

³² Nominalisations neutralize most of the thematic and syntactic properties of verbs so they tend to cause ambiguity and vagueness in language. Verbal nominalisations in which the prepositional object is elided (*e.g.* "the overthrow of the president" omitting "by the army") make it possible to avoid naming a specific agent.

³³ "Amanhã", Folha de S. Paulo (4 August 1964).

³⁴ Editorial, *La Nación* (9 July 1976).

³⁵ For example, "Congress, in turn, accepted the coup as [an] inevitable feature of the defense of the democratic system", in "Coisas da política", *O Jornal do Brasil* (7 April 1964) and "one has noted the painful breakdown of constitutional order, as an inevitable consequence of the wrong style [of government] practiced since 1963 by the UCRP" in the editorial of the *La Nación* (9 July 1966).

explains the so-called "March of the family with God for freedom", in which more than 500 000 people from São Paulo's upper and middle classes — most of them Catholic and conservative — turned out to demonstrate against Goulart's. The first political event in Brazil to be organised partly by women's civic associations, the march was staged less than two weeks before the military coup.

The use of clichés, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out, is typical of hierarchical societies, such as those promoted by military governments. This explains the exaggerated emphasis on virility in the procoup discourses of Brazil in 1964 and of Argentina in 1976. A comprehensive study of this phenomenon along the lines proposed by Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello in their *History of virility* could well become a chapter in similar study for Latin America. ³⁶

Conclusion

Far from being the normative and timeless principles of rhetoric laid down in classical treatises and textbooks, the pro-coup rhetoric found in the press in Brazil in 1964 and in Argentina in 1966 and 1976, confirms that what can be argued is specific to ideological families and particular historical and social conditions.

This rhetoric crossed national boundaries and became a soft power that was similar in both countries. It sought to make the breakdown of democracy acceptable to the international community. Indeed, the military were constructed as democratic, Christian, eloquent and virile doctor-surgeons and supported overwhelmingly by the press in both Brazil and Argentina. In both countries, a very similar rhetoric was used to legitimise the dictatorial governments not only locally but internationally. As Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira writes about the 1964 coup in Brazil:

The military that seized power resorted to the methods of civil war to destroy the opposition and crush all forms of resistance. Therefore, they sought to preserve a formal appearance of respecting the Constitution, and representative democracy in order not to embarrass President Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy's successor, in the eyes of the United States public and not to inhibit the provision of military cooperation and financial assistance to Brazil.³⁷

³⁶ Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, eds., *Histoire de la virilité* (Paris: Seuil, 2011).

³⁷ Bandeira, *Argentina, Brasil y Estados Unidos*, 343.

~ María Alejandra Vitale ~

The press played a key role in this strategy by using "assertion softeners" to render invisible not only the Armed Forces as leaders of the coup but also the very coup itself.

Finally, it is remarkable how in Argentina invisibility became an integral part of the human rights violations committed by the military junta that seized power on 24 March 1976. This strategy crystallised in the use of the term "the disappeared" (Spanish: *los desaparecidos*), a nominalisation of the verb "disappear" (Spanish *desaparecer*) in the sense of "cease to exist" which, as the Dictionary of the Spanish Language of the Royal Spanish Academy says, is intransitive. Because semantically intransitive verbs involve only one participant role (in this case, the people who disappear), the identity of those who made them disappear remained hidden. The fact that the murdered bodies of "the disappeared" were also concealed, only serves to confirm that rhetoric and performativity are inseparable.

(Translated by Douglas Andrew Town)

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Predicaments of war and peace

Ivo Strecker

Initially, I wanted to deal in this paper mainly with the ethnography of war and peace in southern Ethiopia, and I intended to keep theoretical debate to a minimum. But, as armed conflict remains a contemporary reality I find it necessary to tackle some more general questions, shifting the focus on theory and method in the anthropological study of warfare. In so doing I will critically examine some of the work done previously in this field.

My point of departure is that engaging in armed conflict and writing about it are not separable activities because theory and practice influence each other and constitute a causal whole. Because it is so basic, let me repeat the point: fighting and writing are not separable because knowledge influences action and vice versa. This is why we must work towards a critical theory of warfare. A critical theory helps to undermine the practice of armed conflict instead of legitimating and thus perpetuating it like many of the existing theories of warfare tend to do.

I want to expand on this point by examining Katseyoshu Fukui's essay "Cattle colour symbolism and inter-tribal homicide among the Bodi". 1

The use of 'and' in the title makes one wonder what kind of relationship may exist between the unlikely pair of cattle colour and homicide, and at close inspection it turns out that Fukui says nothing about the primary function of perceiving, knowing, caring for and speaking about individual cattle by means of their colour patterns, but, following Berlin and Kay, he gives a nice outline of Bodi colour classification and the way in which colours are used to name favourite cattle. He also shows how the Bodi, like so many other pastoralists in East Africa, ritually link people to particular animals and name them after them.

Fukui sees in this linkage an act of identification and mentions that persons identify themselves with their favourite animals by receiving their names after them, by wearing necklaces signifying the animals, by singing about them and so on.² He sums up this identification with the statement that "It is no exaggeration to say that a man regards life without his morare (favourite animal) as hardly worth living".³ As Bodi men identify themselves with their favourite animals, they are distressed when these animals get sick.

¹ Katsuyoshi Fukui, "Cattle colour symbolism and inter-tribal homicide among the Bodi", *Senri Ethnological Studies* 3 (1979).

² *Ibid.* 163, 170.

³ *Ibid.* 170.

[@] African Yearbook of Rhetoric 3, 3, 2012, ISSN 2220-2188, ISBN 978-0-9870334-2-0: lvo Strecker, "Predicaments of war and peace", pp. 45-53.

Therefore they perform an animal sacrifice or go and kill a member of a neighbouring group in order to help their favourite animal to recover. They go also to commit homicide when the morare has grown old and has died a natural death or has been ritually slaughtered and eaten by the age-mates of the owner. As Fukui says, "Sometime after this ceremony, the man who has lost his morare will take a few age-mates with him on an expedition to kill a member of a neighbouring group". When he returns, the killer is ritually cleansed, and later receives scarifications on one of his arms, which signify that he has slain an enemy.

Fukui gives four cases of such homicide and then ends his paper with a short paragraph entitled "Continuing inter-tribal homicide". Here he says:

It has now been established that the death (or sometimes illness) of a man's favourite animal (mostly an ox) is a primary factor in the killing of members of neighbouring groups. As the Bodi put it... "When a morare dies, I become resentful and go to kill a Mursi or highlander". For the Bodi, cattle do not belong to the animal world... but to that of mankind... The morare institution is the most striking illustration of this belief. If his morare is ill a man will sacrifice another animal to aid its recovery, as though he wished himself to recover from an illness. ⁵

I will return to this passage presently, but before I do this let me quote Fukui's final statements:

Thus, while cattle continue to die, there will, of course, be no lack of occasions *[sic]* for men to go on lufa [raiding] expeditions against neighbouring peoples... When I asked the Bodi, "Will there be an end to killing and warfare if you get many cattle and abundant pasture?", they replied "No; they will go on forever".

Now, there are a number of points in Fukui's paper, which ask for criticism. I go through them one by one: the most general is that Fukui suggests that the Bodi will go on killing others forever. They will never stop killing because they hold certain beliefs about the identity of man and beast and think that they can only rescue their beasts and themselves by killing innocent others.

This sounds mad and exotic and may be what people expect to hear from anthropologists, but to me it is an expression of the alienated stance of the anthropologist, and I dare say that if Fukui had asked the Bodi a more sensible question and had discussed with them the reasons for warfare more

⁴ *Ibid*. 170.

⁵ *Ibid.* 175-176.

⁶ *Ibid*. 176.

deeply, the Bodi would have given him quite a different answer.

Instead of giving us detailed documents of Bodi speech and action, Fukui provides us mainly with stereotypes. Take for example the following: "So interested are the Bodi in cattle that their daily conversations seemed to be about nothing else". Anyone who is familiar with the pastoralists of East Africa knows that here Fukui has grossly distorted the character of their discourse. True, cattle feature prominently in the daily concerns of pastoralist — and how could it be otherwise — but people's daily conversations are, like in all other societies, an integral part of their social life and revolve around politics, economics, kinship and marriage, rituals and beliefs, song and dance, warfare and the like. It would be the task of the ethnographer to listen closely to these "daily conversations" rather than reduce them to "talk about cattle".

This leads me to Fukui's thesis that the death of a man's favourite animal is a "primary factor in the killing of members of neighbouring groups". This is a shallow analysis. Are we really meant to agree that certain fancy beliefs can be primary factors for action? From all we know about the production of "fancy beliefs", we have to expect that they are based on rational practices and have a persuasive and rhetorical character. In other words, beliefs are never "primary factors", and should not be mistaken as such.

A primary factor among the Bodi (as among so many other pastoralists) is the desire to create in the members of their society a strong commitment to their herds. Herding cattle, goats and sheep is often a lonely and extremely trying activity. It involves hardships of various kinds, including the protection of the herds from dangerous animals and their defence against raiders from neighbouring groups. One way of strengthening the commitment of the herdsmen is the institution of the favourite animal, usually an ox or castrated he-goat.

The institution has a persuasive function and its form is poetic. In the technical language of rhetoric the choice of the favourite animal is that of synecdoche: a significant part is chosen to represent a whole. The favourite animal stands for the whole herd. Thus people focus on a specific and clearly perceptible part (the ox) rather than an unspecific and amorphous whole (the herd).

The exaggerated way in which the favourite animal is decorated, praised in song, ritually slaughtered and psychologically invested with feelings may in turn be described by the rhetorical form of hyperbole.

In order to understand the kind of commitment created by the favourite ox, it may be useful to recall a custom, which Fukui does not mention but which used to be common to most of the pastoral groups of

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⁷ *Ibid.* 150.

southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. When they were threatened by others, the warriors would drive their favourite oxen towards the enemy, singing the praise of these animals and showing that they were ready to die for them if the enemy would dare to touch them. Nobody knows who invented this custom, but it is certainly a good strategy for committing the individual herdsmen to the herds and even risk death in the defence of them.

Seen in this light, the rituals and beliefs associated with a man's favourite animal are not primary factors for his action but rather secondary or derived ones. In other words, they have no independent grounding but depend on other factors such as the need for commitment and devotion to the herds.

I think that the defensive practice, outlined above, will find approval by everyone, including the Bodi, Mursi, Nyangatom, Hamar, Maasai, and, for that matter, their anthropologists. But I doubt that the treacherous homicide for the favourite ox which, according to Fukui is practised by the Bodi, will ever find general approval, and I am also convinced that the Bodi themselves would condemn the practice if we were to engage in a meaningful conversation with them about this mater.

In fact, I even doubt that the Bodi would agree with Fukui's analysis. They would probably tell us that no Bodi really has to kill anyone because of the illness or death of his favourite ox. Here it would have been extremely important to have accurate data, covering a certain span of time, which would show on the one side how many Bodi committed homicide when their, favourite animals got sick or died, and on the other side how many refrained from killing, and the reasons why they did so. But Fukui provides only the very general statement that "the man who has lost his morare will take a few age-mates with him on an expedition to kill a member of a neighbouring group". In this form, the statement is certainly false and misleading and exemplifies the alienated and positivist position of the anthropologist. True, some Bodi will go and kill, but others will not, and this difference is crucial for a critical understanding of what is happening, and of how things could be changed.

I have said above that the beliefs and rituals associated with the favourite animal cannot be primary but only secondary or derived factors for homicide. But, interestingly, the empirical cases of Bodi homicide given by Fukui only partly support such a refined thesis.

True, there are cases where men go on expeditions with the sole intention of killing others and bringing home their trophies, but there are also cases where the sickness or death of a favourite animal are not real driving motives but are simply used as convenient excuses for raiding. To illustrate this point I quote Fukui here at some length:

A man's animal had become senile and was slaughtered by his age-

mates in the normal fashion. Ten months later he went on a lufa expedition, accompanied by twenty-five young men... His aim was to kill and not steal cattle but his companions, from the start, were only interested in taking cattle. Not being able to find any, however, they killed four Dime.⁸

A further case shows that Bodi homicide, rather than being motivated by favourite animals may be an undisguised expression of aggression and expansion. A Bodi's favourite animal had died:

Several days after its death, he shot a woman in an area called Fardi in the northern highlands, her death being witnessed by some of his age-mates. In the same month many Bodi raided the northern highlands, together with the Tishana, taking more than one thousand cattle and killing hundreds of people.⁹

What has gone wrong in Fukui's paper is that he has pictured the Bodi as prisoners of some irrational beliefs and concludes that their homicide will go on forever. In this way he has created a hopeless situation, which is worse than the horrific reality itself, for how can there ever be a way out of it?

This leads me to my final criticism. I have already quoted the sentence where Fukui says: "For the Bodi, cattle do not belong to the animal world... but to that of mankind". Here the ethnographer has created mysticism, which is alien to the Bodi and other East African pastoralist.

It is complete nonsense to say that for the Bodi cattle do not belong to the animal world. They certainly belong to the domain of the animal world. This is the ground from where they are then metaphorically likened to human beings. As in the metaphor "George is a lion", the expression "cattle are human" brings two separate domains into focus so that the attention oscillates between two separate domains, the domain of animals and the domain of humans.

This metaphorical likening of man and beast creates lively thoughts and feelings, but there is nothing irrational in it. When we hear "George is a lion", we think about the way in which George may be like a lion, with a tail, a roar, a mane and claws and all, how he may be king of humans like the lion is 'king' of the animals, how he is brave as a lion *etc.* Wouldn't it be hilarious and would we not laugh if one day an anthropologist came from Mars and after much intensive fieldwork would publish his (or her) finding that: "For the English (or Germans, French, Italians *etc.*). George does not belong to mankind but to the animal world?"

⁸ *Ibid*. 172.

⁹ *Ibid*. 175.

We would laugh, but we would also be disturbed, for the misunderstanding would signal how alienated the observer and the observed have been from one another, and we would say to each other, "lets talk to him (or her) and see to it that he gets things right, because as long as he confuses metaphorical with literal meanings he will misrepresent us and make us look silly and irrational".

In other words, the likening of ox and man that underlies the institution of the favourite animal must not be taken literally but should be interpreted as metaphor. If we interpret the likening in terms of the theory of metaphor, the seeming irrationalities vanish and we realise that the Bodi are not imprisoned by immutable beliefs. They themselves have created and are creating the beliefs as part and parcel of their ongoing rhetorical strategies and to the same extent that they make their beliefs they can also modify and change them.

My point in all the criticism which I have voiced so far is that if we turn to the subject of warfare, we do not only face empirical but also theoretical and methodological problems. The difficulties are not easily mastered, but the least we can do is to acknowledge the fact that people make their own history, and that cultural forms are not immutable.

Fukui has pictured the Bodi as prisoners of conventional beliefs, but there is a critical difference between convention and performance. To paraphrase Stephen Tyler, social life is neither anarchic nor determined but a process emerging from the intentional acts of wilful egos constrained by convention. ¹⁰ It is this difference between convention and performance on which we have to focus when we want to study warfare. Let me explain this by means of cases from the Hamar who live not far from the Bodi is South Omo.

Case 1

In March 1973 my friend Bali was staying at the cattle camps in the valley of the Lower Omo. One day he and a number of his Hamar age-mates went scouting because they were at war with the Galeba (Dassanech) and their relationship with the Bume (Nyangatom) was also full of tension.

At noon they reached an area which was rich with certain trees that carried edible fruits. As they were resting in the shade chewing the fruits, a group of hungry Bume turned up who had also come to have a share of the abundant harvest.

¹⁰ Stephen Tyler, *The said and the unsaid: Mind meaning and culture* (New York; San Francisco; London: Academic Press, 1978): 135.

Bali, who told me the story a few days later, heard some of the Hamar talk to each other but did not quite understand what they said. Then, suddenly a Hamar jumped up and killed one of the Bume visitors. The other Hamar followed suit killing the Bume one by one. Only Bali acted differently. He allowed the Bume elder with whom he had been sitting and talking in the shade to hide behind his back, and he held his rifle ready to shoot anyone who would dare to harm his guest. His age-mates respected him and allowed Bali to accompany the Bume elder back to the Omo river and thus lead him into safety.

Case 2

Some late evening in June 1973 when the sun had already gone down, my friend Baldambe and I were sitting in the cattle kraal of our homestead in Dambaiti. This is one of the places where men retreat when they want to talk in quiet to one another, for there, among the cattle, no one will disturb them at this hour. Baldambe had been speaking to me for a while when suddenly we heard the song of a man approaching the homestead. The man came singing, praising Baldambe, who was his mother's brother, and telling in his song that he had just killed someone from a neighbouring tribe. According to custom, Baldambe should have risen now and should have received the killer at the gateway of the cattle kraal, welcoming him with elaborate ritual. But Baldambe did not move until eventually the singing stopped somewhere not far from us in the dark of the night. Then he whispered to me:

He comes and calls me with endearing names and thinks I will praise him for the homicide he has committed. But he went and killed an innocent Bume (Nyangatom). We are at peace with the Bume, why does he think he can show his bravery by killing one of them? I will not welcome him, I will keep silent, no matter what he and others may think and say of me.

Case 3

The third case is mentioned almost in passing in my diary on 1 July 1973:

There are many groups of people and herds passing through Dambaiti these days. They are on their way north in search of grass because the pastures are exhausted in the south. The girls carry milk containers, cow hides and water calabashes on their backs, the men drive the cattle and the goats. The leader of one such group is an age-mate of Baldambe, and Baldambe tells him where the best pastures, the waterholes, ridges to camp on are around here. I join them to listen and learn that this man is Aira Allamba, the man who saved the only surviving Galeba down in southern Hamar recently. Aira seems to be a strong, tough person. Heavy scarification on his chest tell of his past killings and when I ask him why he saved the Galeba, he merely says: "My homestead is not one of liars". Later I discover that in the past he himself had once been saved by his Galeba bond-friend when the peace between the Galeba and the Hamar suddenly came to an end overnight. 11

I think these cases speak for themselves and prove that not all the Hamar follow conventions of killing. As among the Bodi, so among the Hamar, killers are celebrated. They are given special names, receive scarification on the chest and the like. But thoughtful men like Bali and Aira do not kill in order to be celebrated, and responsible men like Baldambe do not celebrate thoughtless killers. Rather, these men base their actions on general and universally acceptable principles which have little to do with the "quest for honour" or any other such motive. They may get celebrated and respected because they have killed, but their killings will have been motivated only by the defence of themselves or others, and not by the wish to win social esteem, vent their anger about the loss of a favourite animal or the like.

In principle Bali, Baldambe, Aira... are opposed to every form of aggression, and they have a keen eye for the deception which is going on when people try to legitimate their blatant aggression against others (raiding for cattle and other forms of robbery) by insisting that they have to prove their manhood.

Baldambe has often pointed out this perversion to me, and I have often heard him say: "Yes, you should prove your manhood, but you do this by watching the gate of your father's cattle kraal and defending it against anyone who may attack it". In his text "Baldambe explains", Baldambe has given a good outline of how the Hamar and Bume made peace with one another more than half a century ago. On that occasion the Bume came to Hamar country singing:

Let us forget our fighting, let our stomach become one, let us forget our fighting, let our stomach become one,

¹¹ Jean Lydall and Ivo Strecker, *The Hamar of Southern Ethiopia. Vol. I: Work Journal* (Hohenschäftlarn: Klaus Renner Verlag, 1979): 149.

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let our talk become one, let us be brothers, let us be in-laws, let us be friends....¹²

The will expressed in this song was sincere, and in spite of many problems, which had to be overcome, this peace has lasted until today. There have been occasional killings (see for example cases 1 and 2 above) which were motivated by beliefs and values very similar to those of the Bodi, and I think that it would not be difficult to find some mindless Hamar who would say: "this killing will go on forever" (compare the Bodi statement quoted by Fukui). But in fact there is no good reason why the killing should go on forever.

The reduction of fighting which the peace treaty between the Bume and Hamar brought about is a convincing proof of this.

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¹² Jean Lydall and Ivo Strecker, *The Hamar of Southern Ethiopia. Vol. II: Baldambe explains* (Hohenschäftlarn: Klaus Renner Verlag, 1979): 33.

¹³ Fukui, *Senri Ethnological Studies* 3, 176.



The message as vehicle, as sign, as content: A diplomat's viewpoint on discourse.

Juan José Santander

Diplomats have their own appreciation of what constitutes "discourse". In my case this appreciation is integral to an effort to understand how intelligence, in the sense that word has in security matters, information if you wish, becomes discourse. These are not academic remarks but my specific viewpoint, as a diplomat interested in national security and for many years engaged in Arab affairs, on a subject that otherwise is indeed an academic one. It is somewhat the theory of a practice.

The appreciation of the message considered as the essence of information in any of its aspects, taking it for a vehicle, points to the fact that it always carries something from an origin to a destination.

If we see it as a sign it is, first of all, the sign of the existence of a sender and can by itself — even by not being sent, or received — constitute a message in the sense of content, provided it has previously been so agreed by sender and receiver: a sort of "yes or no" message.

The content is the cargo carried by the message as a vehicle. In this instance, the message can be purposefully misleading, to avoid the disclosure of its content and, in such a case, this "outer" content is in itself the container of an "inner" secret content which bears the real meaning whose transmission is pursued.

The difference between these angles of view is that technology might be powerful and sophisticated enough as to bar the message as a vehicle, even as a sign although this is more difficult to assure, but it shall inevitably be at odds with contents.

Many techniques have been developed to detect some words considered critical for their meaning, such as war, attack, kill, explode, *etc.*, determining by this the interest of a message, but it is very simple to accord upon a language which avoids these terms. Let alone the fact that terms can by themselves be misinterpreted or misleading.

Then, you can be watching anything coming from someone suspicious, but what if this suspect talks only about common, domestic subjects?

The basic idea is that security cannot be warranted only by technical means and devices, but needs a work of intelligence dealing with the ensemble of attitudes and trends as well in individuals as in groups under suspicion or not, if it is to prevent any kind of criminal deeds.

I think we can reasonably affirm that the basic unit of information is the message, purported to carry some meaning; that is why we call it a vehicle.

Even its absence becomes meaningful, inasmuch as it is signaling the absence or the incapacity, permanent or temporary, of the sender who is supposed to produce it. It is in this sense that we say that it constitutes a sign. And what it carries, its meaning, is its content.

All information deals with contents, and these are shaped by languages, cultures, idiosyncrasies: that is where troubles begin.

I. The message as a vehicle

Let us begin with what a message is as a vehicle, and the reach of technology in this context, that is to say what technology can and cannot do to detect, stop, modify or affect in any way the function of this vehicle.

Being a vehicle is essential to the message. The meaning of it, even if it be irrational, in no way dispossesses it of this condition.

In its initial forms, messages began to be transmitted probably through gestures and grumblings, then words spoken, then written words.

For millennia, the written word was to constitute the preferred way to transmit information. Advances in technology were aimed at making this written message reach its destination faster and safely.

Curiously, further advances led to a return of the spoken message. This is a recent development, as compared to the centuries during which the written text was king, taking us back to what it was before, some five millennia ago.

The vast majority of people were analphabet, but this did not affect this preponderance of written messages, especially because these were exchanged between leaders and ruling elites who, either knew how to read and write or had somebody to do it for them.

Any message is configured, thought, constructed, articulated and anounced in a specific language, and is likewise made to conform to its rules, modalities and idiosyncrasies.

This is important because both extremes of the message's path, *i.e.*, sender and receiver, must share the knowledge, comprehension and ability to express them in that language. Otherwise the vehicle becomes useless.

The mastery of a language is, from this point of view, valuable in two opposite senses: as an open vehicle between sender and receiver and as a closed one for those not familiar with it.

It is important to consider not only how many people use a language or how widespread it is in the world, but also, how crucial may become the knowledge of a language in a specific place.

This is true for spoken as well as for written messages.

The message is always supposed to communicate something; assuming this, can technology stop or deviate it, so that its purposed destination is never reached or its arrival is significantly delayed?

The answer is definitely yes, but only inasmuch as this message uses these technologies.

If this vehicle is circulating by any of those primitive but still active roads such as, for instance, gestures, verbal or mouth to ear transmissions, technology can detect it and record it but cannot stop or delay it.

And by the time technology does that, the message has already been delivered. Depending on the urgency of the matter, these detections and recordings might prove to be useless.

Also, if the message is in a language not familiar to those controlling it, the time lost in translation might be decisive.

These circumstances apply as well to written messages which, depending on the secrecy with which the delivery is made, can go perfectly undetected. And, if detected, the problem of translation remains.

The way technology has restored spoken words in the forefront of communications should alert us in two ways; first: old uses have not disappeared or lost their utility; second: people who are in principle excluded by their socio-economic and educational background, from access to technology, might, by the development of this same technology, be included in a world net of instant communication.

This is no negligible fact in areas where the common trait is analphabetism and the language employed is a dialectical version of a more widespread one so that, those eventually controlling these conversations, must not only be proficient in the language in question but also in this particular version of it.

Although many terrorist attacks were perpetrated and prepared by people with a medium level of formal education or even above, it is also true that many hot areas in different countries and international borders enter, by the characteristics of its population, within the frame described in the precedent paragraph.

If we wish to prevent an action planned in any of these areas, the same technology that allows us to watch them, allows these people to communicate with each other. And that is why knowing their language becomes critical.

Besides, it is less costly for those organising any move in one of these areas to recruit local people and introduce them to a cell phone or any easy-maneuvering device — and that's it. While the other side, to watch them or control their movements and communications must dispose of very costly material and equipment, having also to instruct and train the personnel for its profitable utilisation.

Concerning languages, another important aspect is idiosyncrasy. All

languages are a way of conceiving, understanding and considering the world as a whole, including people and their relationship with each other.

An outstanding example is a word strongly related to values, loyalty, feelings of appurtenance.

It refers, for most European languages, to the father: in English, "fatherland"; in Spanish, "patria", as in Latin wherefrom it is derived, from "pater": father.

Contrarywise, the word corresponding to approximately this meaning, in Arabic, refers to the mother: "ummah".

This implies something more profound than an apparent word puzzle. It shows how deep, wide and far reaching differences in the conception, understanding and consideration of reality between languages can be. These differences in perception reflect differences in conceptualisation so that we cannot safely suppose that they express identical realities only naming them diversely. These are different realities that overlap somehow with each other but not wholly, completely or accurately and most of all, not interchangeably.

The importance of this for our case is that we must take it into account for a correct understanding of somebody else's message, be it friend or foe. And in this, technology is of no practical help.

Technology may detect and control somebody else's communications, but not understand them fully and accurately.

We are responsible for putting these technological means and instruments to an intelligent and purposeful use; but the others — be they competitors, rivals, enemies — have at their disposal all these same means and instruments, the only real limit being whether they can afford them or not.

And those competitors, rivals or enemies might be using ways of communicating that escape, sometimes for their simplicity, from the net of those expensive, sophisticated and advanced devices.

The case of the struggle and fight against terrorism is that of an all out war. In this sense, one must be prepared for anything: the imaginable and the unimaginable too. Mostly because this confrontation intervenes — if it is not provoked by it — across different cultures who think, speak and relate in different languages.

These circumstances require from the analyst a vast, sensitive and flexible capacity for understanding the other and, as important, to be able to recognize who is or might become an ally or an enemy — or be forced, led or encouraged to become one.

So we must be careful about what is the cargo with which we load this vehicle, and this is a decision that also escapes the technological domain.

II. The message as a sign

The message as a sign points to several facts:

- First, there is a sender who,
- Second, is able and willing to communicate but
- Third, the message sent unless by pre-established convention within its text — does neither prove by itself the identity of the sender nor the authenticity of its meaning.

Considering this, we may assume that it is on this aspect of the message that technology can be more useful, because it is able, under certain circumstances, to stop the flow of messages altogether.

If this is the case, the receiver can have only a "yes or no" message: the "yes" standing for "everything is normal" and the "no" for "we cannot communicate right now".

Then, if a delay is imposed in the transmission of messages and this goes undetected, it might introduce an element of confusion into the other camp provoking a situation which might in turn be turned to our advantage.

Moreover, if sender and receiver did not take the precaution of preestablishing ways for the auto-confirmation of the authenticity of the message and/or of the sender's identity, this can be used as another means of introducing doubts amidst them.

Unless it is fixed as a rule of procedure, it is improbable that informal groups acting clandestinely would take this precaution. If they have taken it, we go back to the situation in which the message becomes a "yes or no" one. And by their answer or lack thereof we should be able to see whether they have detected our interference or not, interpreting their "yes or no" message for our own benefit.

This would be the situation, let us say, as perceived from the point of view of an eventual receiver whose communications we wish to detect or control.

Any communication being originated in an area we suspect might be harboring dangerous activities or coming from persons we also suspect for similar or related reasons, should make us become alert and pay special attention to them, even if the apparent content of these communications seems unimportant.

Technology offers efficient means to fulfill such a task. This analysis should take into consideration the language, context and cultural background in which this communication occurs, and must be undertaken by personnel capable of performing it accordingly — if we wish it to be more than mere bureaucratic vigilance.

This intercourse is a two way road. To be useful, our control and

detection should go undetected; otherwise, its purpose could be easily marred or deviated.

Such a sign would be important for the other side because, knowing that they are being watched, they might deploy a set of actions and/or messages intended to deviate or distract our attention from their actual purpose. Also, they might do so just on the supposition that they might be being watched.

These are tasks which are out of reach of soley technological means.

It is opportune to recall the reflections of Professor Emeritus Martin E. Marty of the Chicago University: "I've learned that how we communicate is as important as what we communicate".¹

This he says when referring to the way words such as "jihad" and "crusade" are understood by Westerners and Easterners:

Take the term "jihad", for starters... Those who want to inspire hatred of Muslims... tend to define it as a murderous campaign against non-Muslims. But scholars and moderate Muslims will tell you that the word's root concept is 'struggle' — and that the struggle often refers to the one within ourselves over our own failures. The word crusade inspires a similar misunderstanding. For many Christians, it is an honorable endeavor... Among Muslims, however (and many Eastern Orthodox Christians, for that matter), "crusade" evokes images of bloodthirsty warriors exploiting the land and people as they traveled to the Holy Land — a land that was holy not just to them but to their enemies as well.²

I think it assumes very accurately how difficult an understanding of one another might become, even when using the same words.

According to our understanding — of those terms just quoted or others similar to them — we will assume that they imply either hostility or friendship.

We could be fooling ourselves or playing into the other's hands out of our own prejudices and misconceptions, either by losing the opportunity of securing alliances or by dismissing real threats.

So, we may conclude that while technology enhances greatly our capabilities to communicate and detect or control other's communications, these capabilities can also be profited from by the other side and this detection and control bases its efficacy in remaining undetected themselves. Considering all this, the value of technology remains as ambiguous as that of

¹ Martin E. Marty, "Inter-religious dialogue helps, but don't expect utopia", *The Beyrut Daily Star* (9 August 2007).

² Ibid.

any other instrument: it depends upon the use we are capable of making of it.

III. The message as content

We have, so far, taken into account the "outer" parts of the message: the hull but not the husk, for they are not separate parts, but shape instead the frame that determines its functionality. Let us deal now with its pulp, which is its content that gives it a sense and a purpose.

The simplest way to hide something is to put it on display, so that nobody would pay attention. The apparently most innocent actions and conversations usually are the best disguise. And then, you cannot — and ought not to — control everybody all the time, at risk of ending up not controlling absolutely anything.

Very expensive and sophisticated means can and most probably will be sidestepped by primitive and easy procedures, like using little known dialects or recruiting for messengers or deliverers — even without the recruit's knowledge — people beyond any suspicion because of their appearance.

What is interesting about contents, information and communications is that, though not appearing dangerous or suspect or risky for us, they can nevertheless be very harmful for our projects or our purposes.

This includes not only the case of classified information that for different reasons a government or an organisation would not like to become public.

News or information — messages them all — that common wisdom would tag as actual and factual truth. But then... how many ways do you have of telling a tale so that the hero becomes the villain — and *vice versa*?

Not to speak of the background of that story. This might lead reasonable and well informed people to perceive that a government is in crisis, a currency is going to be devalued, a stock market is to plummet and so on and so forth.

Because truth, when you are going to base your actions upon it, is what you believe to be true — nothing more, nor less.

When we add to this that languages and cultures have their own perceptions and conceptions of reality, these not being always translatable or explainable to people of other cultures: *e.g.* "fatherland" and "ummah"; and then, that the same term — as with "jihad" and "crusade" — when seen from the other's side conveys a meaning which is, for any practical purpose, just the opposite of the one we confer it, we feel led directly into confusion.

And confusion there is.

The problem with contents sprouts from here, from these misunderstandings and understatements which lead us to believe that we are talking about the same subject when we are instead referring to different things entirely. This

might sound too radical but is often the case.

The bearing of all this on security is varied and important.

To begin with, if you do not understand the reality that you want to affect or modify, the most probable result of your actions shall be a failure.

With the virtually universal diffusion of communications, flows of information reach the remotest corners of the world. Symmetrically, news from those remotest corners arrives everywhere. So, we all can know almost simultaneously what is going on anywhere else. It is just a matter of technology and access.

This is a question of messages as vehicles. We bring it here to underline the importance that contents may acquire.

Let us recall some elements:

- News are edited in a specific form, responding to: interests, opinions, idiosyncrasies derived from a certain language and culture as used by a certain government or group.
- For most of the people, these news come as facts, because they usually do not have the means or the information to analyze them critically.
- This biased information is what normally becomes public opinion, as reflected in polls or otherwise.

When this flow of information comes from external -i.e. foreign - sources, it influences the public opinion in our own country. Sometimes, even referring to local events because, though we might try to correct them or neutralise its impact, the doubt persists as to which is the true version.

Considering that international media are concentrated in a few hands, most of them, also, belonging to holdings that gear many different sorts of businesses and act from a selected group of countries, it is easy to suppose that they shall not facilitate any news to transpire, even less, be diffused worldwide, that might harm their interests.

The bearing of this on internal security is evident. Reflecting on these matters this paradox came to me: How come we are so worried about controlling all sort of weapons — from nuclear to chemical to those of mass-destruction and so on and so forth — and yet we do not pay attention to something that as a means can be — and alas, is — used to provoke and produce so much trouble?

I must immediately stress that I am not against any freedom, of press or any other; I just say that, given the present conditions of our world, it would be naive to suppose that information is always the result of an arduous and sincere pursuit of truth.

This link between security and information is something any intelligence service should keep in mind, even if there is very little that can be

done. The spreading of rumors, considering the educational level of the people among which they circulate, can lead to a situation in which confidence in the official news is lost, giving way to the wildest versions of real or concocted facts.

When international pressure is applied to any country or group of countries to compel them to do or not to do something, or to adopt or not to adopt some specific policy, be it economic, political or otherwise, the reaction might be of compliance or of defiance. And frequently, the reasons for both attitudes originate in a miscomprehension of the other side's situation and motives.

These misunderstandings emerge from discrepancies that run deeply in each culture. And by the same token by which you cannot totally identify different concepts (for instance, "fatherland"/"ummah") although they might refer to similar ideas or aspects of reality; institutions and ways of social organisation and relationship created or brought into being in any one society, cannot be transplanted to another as if these were one size fits all pieces of clothing.

This is the danger of a unified way of thinking or, rather, of trying to apply it indiscriminately to any situation anywhere in the world.

Of course, there are similar and related traits that can be found across diverse cultures and societies. We are all human beings and these diversities are the result of the variety of answers which humanity has come up with throughout history.

Understanding, comprehension and conviviality are possible even across cultures and ways of living that appear at first sight so distinct.

Also, that there are paths for international cooperation that go beyond the usual frame First World/Third World or North/South.

Technology can furnish all the data we might wish for, but not the comprehension or understanding capable of putting it all together and making it useful for our purposes, whatever it may be.

Conclusion

I think that after these reflections we may conclude that technology is able to furnish us with the means to assure security.

But the comprehension of the risks, the challenges and the opportunities facing us, depends upon the intelligent and reasonable use to which we are capable of putting them.

This comprehension must extend itself to the motives, situation and circumstances as well of those we consider our friends as of those we consider our rivals or our enemies.

In the case of the former, it is the only way of helping them solve their

problems that, in a world interconnected by instant communications, is also the way of helping ourselves.

For the latter, there is no other way of beating them but by knowing them, their motives, their situation and their circumstances.

Long centuries of practicing diplomacy should be a stout support for obtaining good results in any of these cases.

But leaning on history for help, though it is inevitable and unquestionable, may also be misleading when we ponder how most of our prejudices and misunderstandings sprout from that very source.

For the message history delivers to us is as tainted with our own conception based on our own culture as any other domain of perception and thought. With the aggravation that history displays amidst the prestige due to the past, conferring on it a sort of halo of tradition and of proven wisdom as well.

So, as much as we must be vigilant of the use we make of the technological means at our disposal and mistrust their effective possibilities, we ought to scrutinise our perception of facts to avoid the traps our own way of thinking contrives to snare us in.

Intelligence should therefore be applied both ways: towards the others and their reality as they understand it, and to the reality we take for granted ourselves.

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Rhetoric goes to war: The evolution of the United States of America's narrative of the "War On Terror"

Cezar M. Ornatowski

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that a statesman and commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.

- Carl von Clausewitz. On War.

1. Introduction: Rhetoric and war

As the art of persuasion and argument, rhetoric has traditionally been considered in contrast to violent conflict, with persuasion, or, in Kenneth Burke's terms, symbolic inducement, the preferable alternative to the contest of arms. Rhetoric scholars appear to have, by and large, avoided the subject of war, both for ideological and pragmatic reasons: one does not want to sound as if one approved of war and it is not easy to gain access to the kind of contexts and information that would make for well-informed discussion of war and rhetoric. Yet, in the following discussion I intend to suggest that war and conflict ought to be of concern to rhetoric scholars because, one, they have been central to the human experience and, two, it is in the relationship between rhetoric and conflict or war that what Stephen Cimbala referred to as the "basic values of civilized life" have, especially in recent decades, been forged.¹

Throughout history, wars have played center stage in politics.² War, as Ronald Reid has suggested, is both "an identifiable historical situation" and a "distinctive rhetorical situation", one that "calls forth many rhetorical endeavors addressed to various audiences and propounding various points of view".³ Wars, as Cimbala has argued, "are political creatures. They are fought for political reasons, pushed forward with political passions, and terminated

¹ Stephen J. Cimbala, *The politics of warfare: Great powers in the twentieth century,* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

² William Ury, *Getting to peace: Transforming conflict at home, at work, and in the world,* (New York: Viking, 1999).

³ Ronald F. Reid, "New England rhetoric and the French war, 1754-1760: A case study in the rhetoric of war", *Communication Monographs* 43, 4 (1976): 259-286, 259.

[©] African Yearbook of Rhetoric 3, 3, 2012, ISSN 2220-2188, ISBN 978-0-9870334-2-0: Cezar Ornatowski, "Rhetoric goes to war", pp. 65-74.

with political rationales for victory and surrender".⁴ War is the ultimate expression of political conflict. It does not mark the limit of politics; rather, it may be regarded as politics (to extend von Clausewitz's famous quip about diplomacy) by other means. "State policy", Clausewitz has suggested, "is the womb in which war is developed, in which its outlines lie hidden in a rudimentary state…".⁵ Hence, according to Clausewitz:

The leading outlines of a war are always determined by the Cabinet, that is... by a political, not a military, organ... War is an instrument of policy; it must necessarily bear its character; it must measure with its scale; the conduct of war, in its great features, is therefore policy itself, which takes up a sword in place of a pen...⁶

Therefore, Clausewitz continues, the "political (and, I will argue rhetorical) element" in war lies not so much in the details of strategy or tactics as "in the formation of a plan for a whole war, of a campaign, and often even for a battle..." ⁷

In the following discussion, I suggest that the relationship between "the pen and the sword" is contained in what is perhaps the master rhetorical genre of war and conflict, the genre that contains and articulates the "leading outlines" of any conflict: the war narrative. At its most basic rhetorical level, the war narrative defines the reasons for war, the identity of the opposing sides, the stakes in the conflict, the ends to be pursued, as well as, implicitly or explicitly, the conduct, means, and duration of the conflict. Not every articulation of the "war narrative" necessarily contains all of these elements (in this sense, the war narrative is an ideal rhetorical type), but they are present, in one way or another, in most public discourses that accompany conflict and war. I use the development of the United States of America's narrative of the "War On Terror" in the wake of the attacks of 9/11 as an illustration.

2. The war narrative: The political rhetoric of war

Every war has a narrative. 8 Wars are grounded in narratives; they originate,

⁴ Cimbala, *The politics of warfare*, 2.

⁵ Quoted in Sir Basil Liddell Hart and Adrian Liddell Hart, eds., *The sword and the pen: Selections from the world's greatest military writings* (New York: Crowell, 1976): 151.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ I acknowledge my debt to Steven Martens, a graduate student in my Homeland Security 690 "Ideology, discourse, and conflict" seminar at San Diego State University in Fall 2008, who first drew my attention to the strategic importance of war narratives

evolve and end in accordance with their narratives. Michael Vlahos sees the war narrative as doing three things: providing the "organising framework for policy", representing a "war logic" grounded in an "existential vision", and serving as "the anointed rhetorical handbook for how the war is to be argued and described". Not of least importance, for the soldiers who actually do the fighting and for the civilians on the "home front", the war narrative serves the purpose of morale building. "In war", argues Vlahos, "narrative is much more than just a story". It is "the foundation of all strategy, upon which all else — policy, rhetoric, and action — is built". War narratives, Vlahos suggests, "need to be identified and critically examined on their own terms, for they can illuminate the inner nature of the war itself". ¹⁰

The development and evolution of war narratives offers insights into the nature — including political and rhetorical nature — of conflicts past and present. Their major *topoi* — the identification of the parties to the conflict, the definition of its nature, a statement of the stakes involved and the desired ends, along with an identification of means and duration — dominate public representations of, debates about, and accounts of war and conflict and express a standard "emplotment" or script according to which conflicts are conducted, played out, recounted, and remembered. In this sense, the war narrative makes war come into being, perpetuates it, and often transforms it within what Maurice Charland has called a "discursively constituted history". Within such a history, the war narrative ultimately becomes a critical element in the shaping of collective identities and destinies.

The evolution of the United States of America's narrative of the conflict that had been known — until it was discarded by the Obama Administration — as the "War On Terror" (WOT) provides a current example of the evolution of a war narrative. While all conflicts involve psychological elements related to mobilisation, shaping of public perceptions, and

and whose paper began with exactly these words.

⁹ Michael Vlahos, "The long war: A self-fulfilling prophecy of protracted conflict — and defeat", *The National Interest on line*, (5 September 2006): http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=11982. (Accessed 20 March 2010). ¹⁰ *Ihid*

¹¹ Joseph Tuman notes that media often frame social and personal situations in terms of conflict or confrontation, while in literary studies works of fiction are often analyzed in terms of their central "conflict". "Both fiction and non-fiction need friction", Tuman concludes. Joseph S. Tuman, *Communicating terror: The rhetorical dimensions of terrorism* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010): 167.

¹² Maurice Charland, "Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the *peuple Quebecois*", *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-150. Examples of accounts of war that fly in the face of public narratives are provided among others by Paul Fussell in *Wartime: Understanding and behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

influencing both domestic and enemy morale, the attacks of 11 September 2001 marked, according to some observers, the beginning of a new kind of conflict — a "war of ideas", according to the title of Walid Phares's well-known book — in which words and images became central in a way that transcended, thanks to the Internet and other media of instant global communication, their role in past conflicts, including the Cold War. 13

3. The evolution of the United States of America's narrative of the "War On Terror"

In his initial address to the nation in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September 2001, the United States of America's President George W. Bush defined the response of the United States of America as fundamentally a police operation aimed at bringing the perpetrators to justice: "The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts", the President stated. "I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice". 14 However, toward the end of the same speech, Bush also used the term "war against terrorism", which implied a different and broader sort of operation, one directed not only against specific individuals but also against a tactic: "America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism". 15 The mention of "allies" and the definition of the (collective) cause as "peace and security in the world" broadened the potential parameters of the operation, while its duration was left open by the assertion that "America has stood enemies before and will do so this time", which, through an implied analogy with America's previous wars, suggested a much extended time frame.

Nine days later, in an address to a joint session of Congress, the President defined the adversary as the "enemies of freedom" embodied in a "loose collection of terrorist organisations" scattered over sixty countries. 16 Amid references to World War II and battles against fascism and totalitarianism, the scope of the conflict was broadened ("Our war begins with

¹³ Michael J. Waller, *Fighting the war of ideas like a real war* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for World Politics, 2007).

¹⁴ George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation" (11 September 2001): http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothenation.htm. (Accessed 15 April 2010).

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ George W. Bush, "Address to a joint session of Congress following 9/11 attacks": http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm. (Accessed 15 April 2010).

al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated") and its time frame extended (a "lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have every seen"). ¹⁷ Days later, the name of the operation, "Operation Infinite Justice", was changed to "Operation Enduring Freedom" because the United States of America's policymakers realised that in Islam such final "justice" can only be provided by God¹⁸ and the last thing the United States of America wanted was to be seen as believing that it is acting in the name of God (especially after President Bush's unfortunate initial use of the term "crusade").

The enemy as well as the terms of the struggle were redefined still further in Bush's 2002 "Axis of evil" state of the Union address, in which Bush mentioned Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad, and suggested that "States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, aiming to threaten the peace of the world". 19 Ryan Crocker, the President's special envoy to the Middle East at the time of the 9/11 attacks and later The United States of America's ambassador to Baghdad, remembers that after the speech his Iranian counterpart, with whom he was working in what appeared like perfect harmony to reestablish a civil government in Afghanistan under Hamid Karzai, was offended by the President's remarks and became less willing than before to work with the United States of America. The offending element was the implication that the "war against terrorism" also potentially involved confrontations with specific States. Vlahos criticized Bush's speech for its "metamorphosis" of a "terrorist" enemy into "an evil league of enemy powers", which at "one rhetorical stroke" made the "War On Terror" "equal to the most protean of US struggles". 20 The speech also extended the time frame of the conflict, potentially into infinity: "Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch - vet it must be and it will be waged on our watch".21

By 2006, the "Global War On Terror" (better known at the time by its acronym GWOT) became the Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism (G-SAVE). The reason for changing "war" to "struggle" was the recognition that this "war" was not just a clash of arms that could be "won" on the battlefield alone. On 29 September 2006, in an address to the Reserve Officers Association in Washington, D.C., Bush redefined the scope of the "struggle"

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ David J. Rusin, "Government policies stifle talk of Islam": http://islamistwatch.org/1229/government-policies-stifle-talk-of-islam. (Accessed 15 April 2010).

¹⁹ George W. Bush, "2002 state of the Union address delivered 29 January 2002": http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/stateoftheunion2002.htm. (Accessed 15 April 2010).

²⁰ Vlahos, *The National Interest*.

²¹ Bush, "2002 state of the Union address".

when he began a speech with "I want to speak to you today about the struggle between moderation and extremism that is unfolding across the broader Middle East". He also referred to the struggle as "ideological" and suggested that the extremists "are at war against us because they hate everything we stand for — and we stand for freedom". The speech redefined the conflict as primarily ideological and redrew its contours: from America and its allies against a geographically circumscribed or religiously characterised adversary to moderation vs. extremism, in the Middle East as well as elsewhere. Soon, however, the term "struggle" was also abandoned when it was realized that "struggle" may be interpreted in Arabic as "jihad".

David Zarefsky has suggested that "to choose a definition is to plead a cause",²³ while Denise Bostdorff and Steven Golzwig have argued that "an issue's definition sets up boundaries in which subsequent discussion of the issue takes place".²⁴ "The definition of an issue as a 'crisis'", Bosdorff and Goldzwig note, "has particular implications and encourages the urgent consideration of possibly extreme measures to bring the crisis to an end".²⁵ The war narrative is in effect a set of definitions that together constitute a strategic framework for articulating and prosecuting conflict or war. Douglas Kellner cites British historian Sir Michael Howard's criticism of the Bush administration's characterisation of America's post-9/11 campaign as a "war", since it gave unwarranted legitimacy to what should have been simply described as a criminal act and created unrealistic expectation of both the conduct of the operations and "victory".²⁶

The realisation that the narrative encapsulated in the phrase "War On Terror" failed to help the United States of America win either the conflict on the ground or the "hearts and minds" of critical audiences outside the United States of America prompted a search for new formulations. A 2008 Department of Homeland Security memorandum entitled "Terminology to define the terrorists" directed at United States of America's senior government officials and diplomats explicitly acknowledged that "Words

²² George W. Bush, "The path of war: Address to the Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C. (29 September 2006): http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.29.06.html. (Accessed 15 April 2010).

²³ David Zarefsky, *President Johnson's War on Poverty* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1986): 8.

²⁴ Denise Bostdorff and Steven Golzwig, "Idealism and pragmatism in American foreign policy rhetoric: The case of John Kennedy and Vietnam", *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 24, 3 (1994): http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/goldzwig.htm. (Accessed 7 April 2010).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Douglas Kellner, "Bushspeak and the politics of lying: Presidential rhetoric in the 'War on Terror'", *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, 4 (2007): http://chantrill.net/Kellner_Bush_and_politics_of_lying.pdf. (Accessed 7 April 2010). Howard's speech was available as of 15 April 2010 at: http://thisislondon.com.

matter" (especially, the memorandum emphasised, in an age "where a statement can cross continents in a matter of seconds")²⁷ and that the terminology used by the United States of America's government officials "must accurately identify the nature of the challenges that face our generation". 28 The reference to "generation" was intended to transcend particular cultures, religions, ideologies, or regions. At the same time, the memorandum suggested, this terminology should be "strategic" in marginalising the potential appeal of terrorism and extremism by avoiding glamorising their ideology or tactics through grandiose statements that make them seem more important and a larger threat than they are. Some of the specific recommendations included avoiding statements that imply that the conflict is religious, being mindful that words have a history and a context and resonate differently with various audiences, avoiding labeling diverse groups that exploit Islam for political purposes as a single enemy, emphasising the cult-like aspects of terrorist groups, emphasising the successful integration of American and Western Muslims into democratic society, and "emphasising the positive" by talking about what the United States of America and her allies stand for in addition to what they are against. In effect, the memorandum called for an attempt to articulate a common vision for the future behind which "this generation" of humankind can unite.

The Muslim experts and leaders allegedly consulted by the Department of Homeland Security suggested that the current struggle be redefined as "A Global Struggle for Security and Progress". ²⁹ The memorandum, while not endorsing this specific designation, suggested that the United States of America's public diplomacy emphasize that the "civilized world" is facing a global challenge that transcends geography, culture, and religion and that the struggle is for "security" and "progress" — values that all people, especially those living in chaotic environments with little hope for economic or social advancement, might find appealing.

At the same time, the Extremist Messaging Branch of the United States of America's National Counterterrorism Center developed a set of specific guidelines for describing the "enemy" in the context of the conflict. The guidelines suggest not engaging in ideological debate with terrorist messages (which gives them legitimacy), being as accurate as possible about the threat and the terrorists' motives (not exaggerating it and thus compromising credibility), not invoking Islam ("we should treat (the al-Qaida network) as an illegitimate political organisation, both terrorist and criminal"),

²⁷ "Terminology to define the terrorists: Recommendations from American Muslims", United States of America's Department of Homeland Security (January 2008): 2. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/126.pdf. (Accessed 30 April 2010).

²⁸ *Ibid*. 1.

²⁹ For security reasons, the identities of the consultants have not been revealed.

using the term "totalitarian" to describe the enemy (thus what they want should be described as a "global totalitarian state" not the "caliphate", which to some Muslims may have legitimate historical associations), and avoiding potentially controversial foreign terms (such as "jihad") that may become intellectual traps.³⁰

The Obama administration has embraced both approaches to modifying the United States of America's war narrative: on the one hand, appealing to a global audience and to universal values and, on the other hand, attempting to isolate and marginalise the "enemy". In a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington in August 2009, John Brennan, President Obama's Assistant for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, outlined the Obama administration's approach as founded on two key moments: the recognition that "how you define a problem shapes how you address it" and emphasizing not just "what we are against" but also and especially "what we are for — the opportunity, liberties, prosperity, and common aspirations we share with the world". 31 The term "war on terror" was thus dropped, as was the adjective "global" and the noun "jihadist". Instead, the United States of America was described as being at war with al-Qaida (defined as a "death cult") and its "violent extremist allies who seek to carry on al-Qaida's murderous agenda". 32 In his Inaugural Address, Barack Obama described the "enemy" simply as "a far-reaching network of violence and hatred".33 The campaign (not "war") against extremism has been refocussed on promoting "universal values", as well as, one the ground, addressing "upstream factors — the conditions that help fuel violent extremism". 34

4. Conclusion: War narrative in the era of global power

The war narrative provides a broad frame for domestic and foreign public discourse about and representations of a conflict and thus a foundation for the political rhetoric of war, including the speeches of politicians, propaganda, and public diplomacy. It serves to mobilise popular support and

³⁰ "Words that work and words that don't", Counter Terrorism Communications Center 2, 10 (14 March 2008): http://documents.scribd.com/docs/q0jdlrtjgl9jegyxhyp.pdf. (Accessed 15 October 2009).

³¹ John O. Brennan, "A new approach to safeguarding Americans", Center for Strategic and International Studies (6 August 2009): 4. http://whitehouse.gov/the press office/Remarks-by-John-Brennan-at-the-Center-for-Strategic-and-International-Studies. (Accessed 15 September 2009).

³² *Ibid*. 5.

³³ Barack Hussein Obama, *Inaugural Address*, 20 January 2009: http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address. (Accessed 15 April 2010). ³⁴ Brennan, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5.

justify war in public opinion (both domestic and international). In wartime, the rhetorical framing embodied in the war narrative provides a way of conceptualising as well as potentially mastering the strategic situation. The war narrative also has operational implications; a totalisation of conflict embodied in such descriptives as "life and death struggle" or "better dead than red" precludes compromise and make the conflict a struggle to the last street and house. In this way, the war narrative establishes a direct relationship between political rhetoric and military action, in effect between rhetoric and history as the latter plays out, among its other major sites, "in the trenches".

War, as Mary Kaldor points out, is intimately connected to the evolution of the modern state.³⁵ Kaldor cites Charles Tilly to the effect that "States made war and war made the State".³⁶ Moreover, in the contemporary "globalising" world states are transforming in a variety of ways that are "bound up with changes in... forms of warfare".³⁷ The so-called "new wars" (of which the "War On Terror" is a paradigmatic example) are based not on confrontation between states but involve, at least on one end, non-state actors, often loose coalitions of diverse forces motivated by a common purpose or underpinned by an ideology (political or religious). Such coalitions — militant movements, insurgencies, guerilla and revolutionary groups — are often held together by shared narratives of struggle and conflict; for such actors the war narrative not only serves the purpose of political mobilisation but also constitutes the central unifying and identity-bestowing "myth". As the 21st century conflicts tend toward being increasingly identity driven, the war narrative (or some variation of it) appears to be gaining center stage as one of the major genres of global political rhetoric.

Especially with the post-Cold War shift in strategic emphasis among major military powers from "hard" to "soft" power, ³⁸ the war (or conflict) narrative has become both a vital element of national political and military strategy and a central aspect of the projection of power, especially for a global power such as the United States of America. As the evolution of the United States of America's post-9/11 war narrative shows, in the age of global communication, global power is projected through increasingly universal vocabularies of value, at once attempting to appeal to both domestic and global audiences and reflecting an understanding of and concern with both local and global cultural, historical, and political environment. This evolution appears to confirm Cimbala's thesis that in recent decades "War (at least as

³⁵ Mary Kaldor, "Beyond militarism, arms races, and arms control", Social Science Research Council (2003): www.ssrc.org.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ See also Craig Hayden, *The rhetoric of soft power: Public diplomacy in global contexts. Lexington studies in political communication* (New York: Lexington, 2012).

articulated through the war narrative) has become coterminous with the struggle to define basic values of civilised life", albeit by the "most uncivilised means". Such a development raises a provocative rhetorical (and political) problem: in an increasingly "global" and interconnected world and with the capability to project power on a global scale, yet in the face of fundamental historical, cultural, and linguistic divisions and conflicts, what might be the "positive terms" and "universal values" that might constitute the narrative that articulates a comprehensive and appealing, shared, and, finally, conflict-free vision for humankind?

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³⁹ Cimbala, *The politics of warfare,* 8.

A bibliography on South African diplomacy

Klaus Kotzé

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THE ELEPHANT AND THE OBELISK

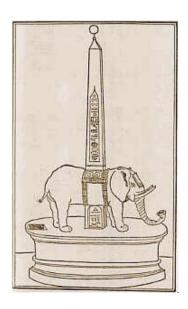
About the Special Series and Imprint of the African Yearbook of hetoric

In the fantastical imagination Europe holds of Africa the Elephant and the Obelisk have an enduring presence. During the Renaissance their images lent an African presence to the culture of emblems, not much different in purpose and means from the modern obsession with branding logos supposed to encapsulate a corporation's ethics beyond selling goods. In rhetoric (of which emblems were the visual analogue) the Elephant spoke to the virtue of memory and the prudential value attached to formulating forward-looking arguments heeding past lessons. The Obelisk, not unlike Neptune's trident, emblematised the penetration of wit – a point driven home by its engraved hieroglyphs. Memory and intelligence, prudence and projection, sure footedness and quick sharpness – the Elephant carrying the Obelisk on its back told a telling tale about the distanced virtue European high culture, at the very time of Portuguese descobrimentos, attributed to a continent, Africa, which had always been part of it, in reality or in imagination. Africa has often afforded Western minds an occasion to reflect.



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