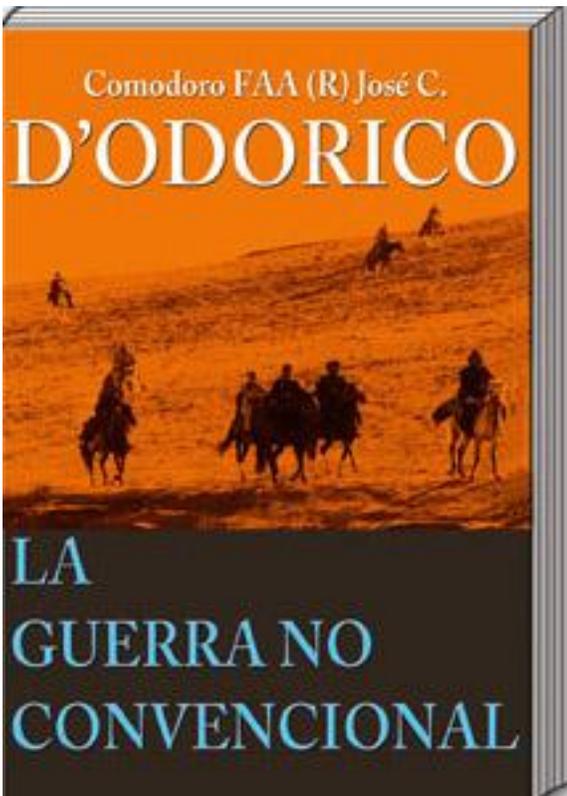


UNCONVENTIONAL WAR

CHAPTER VI

NON-TRADITIONAL THREATS

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More Undesirable Problems

One of the first consequences of the fall of the former Soviet empire in 1989 was the end of a long period of political-military confrontation carefully regulated so that the actors would not suffer any surprising assaults. The change was frankly lamented by many political and military leaders around the world. The unique co-existence accord that had been tediously orchestrated and preserved by NATO and the Warsaw Pact did not only contain the international lack of trust. In addition, it alleviated the tense alertness of the military commanders.

The hypothesis of conflict around the mere existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) was a stressful piece for the leaders due to the doubt. In that period, the USSR secretly avoided having the negotiations interfere in the peripheral zones of large theaters of operation. With this trick they retained a free hand to continue the *revolutionary war*, the preferred operational model with which it obtained unconcealed advantages in world conquest. At the same time, the “West” settled for hanging an imaginary wall around the WMDs and got disoriented watching the rival successes in “the other war”.

The “West” did not know how to design a restraint capable of deterring the insistent advance of its ideological-political opponent by “other means and methods”, the secret of which was in the execution of *revolutionary war*. After the Pact imploded, the so-carefully articulated peace fell into doubt when the old enemy for dialogue disappeared.

That the democratic states responded to this style of conflict with an ambivalent attitude caught one's attention. It may have been because peace, implanted by force with the bipolar architecture, made possible the economic and social-political development that seduces the future victims marked by Marxism. We will never know with scientific certainty and we can only speculate.

When the fall of the Berlin Wall announced that the era was concluding, the resulting vacuum began to fill up with a seditious assortment of confrontations of unusual classification that, until then, weren't worth of the first page. To compound the confusion caused by this miscellany, the conflicts began to be called *non-traditional threats*, in recognition of the high level of abstraction.

Some more inquisitive observers realize that those marginal confrontations are also organized operations and consider them *low intensity conflicts* (LIC). Until now, those disputes have not received all the desirable doctrinarian attention. In the meantime, there is a very provocative challenge for the directors: to understand without reservation that *non-traditional threats* lead to *internal or domestic LICs*.

For the moment, that expectation has not yet caught on, but it would be convenient if the problem got some attention soon.¹ While these definitions suffice, what prevents considering those events as a "different" war, if in that way we get closer to the reality that is the only truth?²

Surely, no political regime wanted to graciously announce an internal war assaulting the community and that apprehension explains why we resort to names and the roundabout treatment of the event. However, the problem is minimized when it is cataloged as less than a conflict. Regardless, signs such as the moderate magnitude of the action, the limited spectacle, the public repercussions, the relative external projection, the more reduced number of participants and the lesser effort by the State in defending itself are details present in a war. Even if the phenomenon is of a lesser scale, its most salient traits do not erode its identity.

Sun Tzu, without mentioning the dimensions of the conflict or its danger, assured that "war is a matter of vital importance for the State." Therefore, if the threats go against the security of the country, the suggested qualification is not illogical, since the events

cause material destruction and moral damage to the population like any broad-ranging dispute.

As long as the disputes are resolved by resorting to integrated social-political, economic and military actions intended to resolve a unified problem; there is no foundation for doubts about the course of a war. The variable intensity of a conflict does not divest it of its essence. Meanwhile, the final detail to check is to verify that the attacker wants to impose his will on the legitimate authorities, although he does not mention that objective.

The action of *non-traditional threats* in the same place and time confirms an unconventional confrontation in the form of a war. To be worthy of this concept, it is not required that the events reach pre-fixed levels, nor do they have to adapt to any specific profile. It is a question of making war for other purposes.

In the face of the hint of threats, national authorities are obliged to react preventively. If the events are stubbornly denied, unrecognized or minimized, over time the negative consequences for society will rise. The most reproachable official conduct is that which delays or declines to search for solutions due to indolence or condescension, allowing the aggression to progress without impunity and letting the offenders scoff at the State.

Do Not Neglect Vigilance

There is a theater of world war where the production, commercialization and transportation of illicit substances have ceased to be just the problem of a few countries. In reality, it is a scourge that puts at risk the mental health, security and even the social customs of numerous national communities who, until recently, had only vague experiences with such products and their effects.

Today, the reprehensible drug trade is practiced with the help of logistical services envied by large honest companies. Those methods transfer scandalous tons of poison over all kinds of routes, while even more incredible loads of paper money move from one country to another. The mercenary units use high-level weapons and systems and corruption in official spheres is spreading like an epidemic.

Compact groups of individuals, expert and armed, protect the related plants, laboratories, depots and routes, and they man infinite means of transportation, among

which even cargo submarines can be counted. Colombia is a country that annually acquires a large number of double-engine high speed and long distance airplanes. It is obvious to say that the cartels are important buyers, since they use them to carry cargos to distribution centers in distant countries. A fraction of the rural guerrilla fighter groups contracted by the narco-traffickers come from the revolutionary era but, due to the mitigation of those tendencies, they now accept less quixotic contracts.

In those informal, truly “foreign legions”, one can find former members of the Western SFs (Special Forces) and from countries that belonged to the Warsaw Pact, common guerrilla fighters of the most diverse ethnic origins and the old Russian “spetsnaz”.³ In short, the majority of mercenaries have military seniority and a common feature: they are demobilized nationals having difficulties adapting to the “time between two wars”, or what peace is, according to Lenin.

In large urban centers regimented groups are active that operate with unconventional disciplined skill. Their long criminal training allows them to perform like a conglomeration of efficient urban guerrillas. Those “soldiers of fortune” form small forces, composed of several dozen men, financed by the drug cartels.

The supreme chiefs of the mafia are not interested in the ideology that captivates the paramilitaries they contract with, but rather how they behave in defending the installations and assets they leave in their care. If the direct chiefs of those semi-militarized organizations want to wave thematic flags in order to make their followers more solidly cohesive or exhibit a pseudo-romantic political image, it is a question that only concerns them.

The use of politicized guerrillas in an activity eminently criminal is an admission cloaked in fragility that the irregular structures of ideological conflict have today. The logistical support of those mini-armies is no longer offered by the generous revolutionary centers of the past, and, despite the risk involved in the adventure, it pushes those that want to earn huge sums in a short time to offer criminal services to those who are willing to pay.

The guerrilla fighters still active cannot rejoice too much, since there is no abundance of contracting organizations that also pay good soldiers. Therefore, pragmatism imposes its

rules on the guerrilla organizations orphaned by a generous sponsor, but there are still other groups linked to profound religious and political convictions that stage important irregular wars. The fundamentalist sector, represented by the Islamic *fedayin* and *taliban*, is the most explicit paradigm of this era.

Socialist adventures with weapons have almost disappeared from the revolutionary clamor and have caused loyalties to slip to other trends. Subjective sentiments compete heavily with the dark green color of the dollars that pay for services rendered. Also, it is the cohesive efficiency that maintains the formal discipline in the paramilitary units. The Colombian FARC-ELN openly state that they fight inspired by the unstained ideological epic but with sincerity, survive thanks to their unconcealed monetary tack.

The operative tactics of the urban and rural guerrillas have not been substantially modified, such that the few changes there have been easily acclimated to the new demands. Current chiefs of the groups present themselves as political fighters in order to disengage themselves from the denigrating etiquette of the delinquents that vilify them, but their public actions denounce the true image.

Leisure in some countries is a painful social endemia that leaves its footprint on the lifestyle of the poorest classes. Those who do not find satisfactory alternatives to meet their needs, look for incidental solutions. The compact human groups find more space in the periphery of metropolitan concentrations. However, the supply is limited and many aspirants end up piling up in indigent belts that drown the housing developments. The more audacious invade the interior of the cities, occupying vacant buildings and public places. To state that this social group is a factory for instability and insecurity is obvious.

This is how “proletarian belts” that rattle the nerves of medium and high-income residents, who fear becoming the object of the violence of socially resentful subjects, materially besiege gigantic modern urban centers. If the government is apathetic and does not take charge in time to correct the imbalance, the infiltration of common land will be a slow but continuous reality. The intruders’ settlements grow and take on allegorical titles (emergency shelters, youth villages, favelas, shanty towns, bidonvilles, etc).

Communities formed that way expand erratically when the public power does not dedicate appropriate attention to them. That bureaucratic conduct worries the citizen type

and is more visible with the increase in personal and social insecurity. In face of the deterioration of the scenario, some administrations settle for introducing cosmetic changes in order to lower the tone of the protests, but if the usurpers reach the urban center, the probability of a clash between demographic classes increases in a serious way.

The social field has other rough spots. Internal migrations, as well as international migrations, produce a multicolor circulation of human beings in search of immediate solutions. Foreigners, mostly lacking identity, health and travel documentation, simply infiltrate across porous borders and then surreptitiously set themselves up in the “proletarian belts”. Among those immigrants are some who have outstanding warrants under the legal system in their states of origin and they organize criminal focal points in the new settlements.

To defend himself against a local community that is reluctant to accept him, the foreigner shields himself with his traditions and, together with other compatriots, constructs a kind of cultural barrier that he considers as his micro “fatherland” within the backwater. Such expressions of isolationism generate tense relations with the native-born and, if they are not rectified in time, can give rise to repeated feuds.

African and Latino migrations escalated in such a way that inevitably the conflicts involved both the country of destination and origin. The need to keep those currents under control forces the authorities of the implicated states to make more forceful decisions even though they put a chill on international relations. In the current world economic situation, there is reduced demand for workers in the countries usually chosen as a destination, and it may be due to this that the migratory flow is tending to ebb.

The phenomena reviewed up to this point have similarities among them and are characterized by being historical creators of crises. Up until recently, they didn't frame wide-ranging political conflicts and they were handled routinely by administrations, sometimes with the help of the public force. But those circumstances are changing, since now they cause more extensive and deeper social damage.

Diplomacy is more comfortable resolving the usual problems in its specific field, such as the definition of borders, recovery of territory, defense of its citizens residing abroad, use of the sea, non-renewable raw materials, political relationships and defense agreements,

among other themes. Also included in this package are the crises and collisions that start in episodes of conventional war or a non-traditional complicated problem. In this tumultuous environment, LICs are occupying a space and frequency that require more punctilious looks from the governments.

At this moment in the world, the Security Council of the UN has an active presence sustained by five powerful permanent veto-votes (USA, UK, France, China and Russia) that form a pole of power capable of containing more than one rebellious spirit. The political endorsement of those five members fortifies the decisions of the Council and makes more cautious the confrontational impulse of the second line countries. The forces for peace organized under the auspices of the General Secretary and the Council collect sufficient international approvals to assure the continuity of their cooperation.

Intimacy of the LIC

In the beginning, an LIC was described as a confrontation between countries of different potential, where the stronger mobilized only part of its war capability to resolve a problem with military resources. We could interpret it as the method a great power resorts to in order to achieve an objective of normal size.

In a first line state, the mission of an LIC is to resolve a moderate situation, where national integrity is not in play. Hypothetically, it can be achieved with the partial support of its own means, which include a segment of the military instrument. There is no need to compromise all the country's patrimony or to profoundly alter community life. But the opponent, above all if the *casus belli* threatens its existence, may not mirror this consideration. Probably the smaller State sees this as total war, since it will be affecting its historical continuity and independence.

In this mixed up world it is not at all impossible that a government may confront a particularly agitated internal crisis that puts to the test its decision to utilize the means it possesses, without excluding the partial use of its armed forces. Objectively, it is the configuration of the conditions to plan a native LIC, aimed at suppressing a danger.

In the *interior* or *domestic LIC*, the objectives do not require that the operations of the armed services involve the whole territory. Also, the skirmishes are occasional and the rival

carries out kinds of fighting that match the type of threat. Today *domestic LICs*, recognized as such or not, are part of reality, but a government has the duty to avoid that they be managed exclusively by initiative and together with *non-traditional threats*. Both *subversive war* and *civil war* are also internal unconventional conflicts, but they greatly exceed the scope of the *domestic LIC*.

In *interior LICs*, the enemy to be confronted has ephemeral territorial roots and he doesn't try to install his own administration, nor found a state within the State. He simply longs to achieve freedom of action in order to carry out his marginal activity. He achieves his successes based on the mechanisms of a complex corporation, whose criminal identity leaves clear traces in ordinary life. The pain, present in any conflict, is also part of *domestic LICs*, but the level its effects reach depends on the nature of the threat.

Narcotrafic is the driver of numerous *interior LICs*. Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador can certify that convincingly. But, surprisingly, not one government recognizes that it is experiencing an irregular war, despite much confirming evidence. They usually declare that the events constitute a practice worthy of criminals. However, the scuffles carry the seal of the COIN style and are played out among members of the SFs and paramilitary groups, equipped with the best gear on the arms market.

The unconventional aptitude of the members of those groups denounces their military background, to the extent of requiring as a response the intervention of joint operations with the armed forces, since frankly they surpass the firepower and maneuvering of the police patrols. What other proof is needed then to state that such *domestic LICs* are micro-wars that differ from historical wars, and even from other unconventional wars?

The security of the states that fight in *internal LICs* is precarious and unstable, such that it requires a firm reaction that is not satisfied by fastidious methods and media statements. When the State is attacked by crooks that force the undertaking of a mini-war, allowed or imposed, it has no reason not to defend itself with the most efficient means, including uncondescending legal regulations compatible with the circumstances.

If the State is pushed into an open conflict, it has the duty to conduct the defense with the means put at its disposition by the Constitution and the law, using them

unflinchingly, with vehemence and perseverance. The gravity of the offense will determine the quality and duration of the defense, which should be orchestrated by specialized professional organizations.

If a *non-traditional threat* takes on an international character by implicating several states, coordinating the defense among the interested countries is recommended in order to prioritize the operations and save on expenses that will become heavier as times goes on. By sharing this task among several governments, the defense pact is capitalized and performance is perfected. If the official response shows signs of negligence, laziness or, even worse, ignorance of the problem, a *domestic LIC* can advance dangerously. Furthermore, since it is normal that the associates have their own particular views about the event, the decisions will be more debated.

The Hypothesis, The Conflict

It must be recognized that the past centuries were more benign for the work of the major states, since the principal actors and the extras were clearly identified. White was white, black was black, until the ideological revolutions clouded the political panorama and the issuance of the hypotheses of conflict were no longer an enunciative pastime to be transformed into a product of strategic art.

The *revolutionary war* theorized by Vladimir Ilych Lenin was something more than a new model of conflict and it took the world awhile to discover it. Even today that insurgent procedure continues to conceal some mysteries that have not been totally unraveled. If they had been opportunely studied, there would be more doctrines explaining that tangled conflagration and also there would be more transparent information available about *subversive war*, typically the mother *par excellence* of the former.

Something similar takes place with other sketches of irregular wars, where there are profiles that specialists still don't want to define. This situation reminds me of the scarce attention given to the writings of Mao Zedong in the last century. The defense is prone to give less importance to the antagonisms where the actors are less noisy, although they are subtle and incisive. Therefore, in carrying out a conventional plan, it is always appropriate to supplement it with an additional and provisory unconventional test that assures there are not other risks crouching.

This situation counsels the issuance of a hypothesis of conflict that considers the probability in a field where there are few responses like the unconventional response, in particular that of *non-traditional threats*. In prior centuries, the neighboring countries were seen as devious adversaries. Today, they have been transformed into possible allies who modify the parameters of defensive planning. These variations usually refer to the conventional conflicts that have less probability of occurring.

In general, defensive policy doesn't assign much importance to unconventional problems and among them *non-traditional threats*. Normally the defense does not enter unconventional planning, unless there is a war underway. Therefore, in a period of peace, it is usual for COIN training to be added as a complement to general training.

Personally, I would be calmer knowing that defensive organizations also show some interest in unconventional conflicts, including *non-traditional threats*. Surely such studies would promote the management of a more detailed and comprehensive doctrine on the more discrete angles of national security.

A few conjectures can be made about that vacuity, generally the fruit of the administration's political hypersensitivity. Taking care of its public image, the governments are reluctant to embroil themselves in conflicts that put to the test their ability to dominate power. However, that conduct does not avoid the fact that internal disturbances continue to exist and go beyond the civilian-political strife. Moreover, they get worse if there is foreign complicity. When a *non-traditional threat* is studied, it would be desirable that the work end with the formulation of a hypothesis of conflict qualified by its dangerousness.

I am certain that there will be no lack of scandalized opinions that critique the impropriety of cataloging a crisis originated by a non-traditional threat as a war, but it cannot be disavowed that war is an outrageous way to make policy, far beyond the scope of the event. For starters, nothing impedes framing the threats in a hypothesis of conflict that could serve as the basis for the subsequent planning. It is a prudent decision by a wary State, since an *internal LIC*, small as it may be, is harmful to public life and diminishes the country's security.

Let's Visit an LIC

I refer to one that has four notable basic components. The example will serve to demonstrate that it is unquestionably a mini-war suited to the particularities of such phenomena. It is a diffused case and even populist because it is paradigmatic, reiterated and very current.

The ingredients are considered modern toxic pandemics that manifest themselves with operative and logistical-commercial methods that put to test the repressive capacity of less thoughtful governments. I am referring to *narcotraffic*, *mercenary guerrillas*, *organized crime* and *illegal immigration*, which act as unquestionable drivers of an *internal LIC* and fatally transnational LIC, which draws the most official attention.

The detailed observation of the LIC warns that the tight interrelationship of its associative composition is determined by the combination of money, impunity and power. The paramilitary-armed groups use many patterns of combat that were learned from the professional insurgency driven by the Warsaw Pact. Among the active instruments, terror is still being used as an apt element for bending the will of the enemy.

Without any moral shame, the current paramilitaries do not hesitate to bury ideology in the junk heap and accumulate riches that they can rarely enjoy. Víctor Julio Suárez Rojas (alias) Mono Jojoy,⁴ prominent director of the Colombian FARC, wore on his wrist when he fell dead in the middle of the jungle a superb Rolex valued at US \$13,000 as an undeniable testimony to the greedy thinking that soars over such organizations.

In the conflict analyzed there are three *non-traditional threats* indispensable for configuring the *domestic LIC*, while the fourth is doubtful, but can't be discarded. Natural interaction increases the synergy of the group. *Narcotraffic* is the productive source of spurious assets; *mercenary guerrillas* take charge of the paramilitary activities; *organized crime* establishes and operates the management and distribution network, handles coordination and sustains the corporate infrastructure; and *illegal immigration* potentially provides the labor for the other three.

The narco-production economic complex generates the resources to provide the guerrillas with modern equipment, while *organized crime* acts as the big center of operations, where the criminal brotherhood's brains are lodged, sometimes in one person, at other times in the form of a directory committee. The basis of the problem should not

require more than the intervention of the regular public order, since in essence it is primarily a criminal activity. But the scope and the reach of the events notoriously surpass the capacities of the police and require the intervention of more expansive means.

Narcotraffic is the power plant that induces the mobilization of the other threats. Well-known are the effects that vice produces in the country where it is installed, as well as the related social deterioration that goes along with it. It is easy to intuit that the accelerated advance of the combined threats is reflected in national political life and should capture the government's attention because it is responsible for defending the community.

The diversity of interests surrounding the *non-traditional threats* delays the issuance of a rapid official response to the aggression. On the other hand, if the government recognizes the LIC, it will enable the intervention of the defense organizations that are less sensitive to coercions foreign to their environment and that don't need so many consensuses with other State agencies. It is imperative that the authorities do not tolerate the free action of the delinquents.

In face of the danger, a firm political attitude is imposed, through which the administration should position itself at the front of the country's forces to take the initiative without losing time. If the enemy pounding overwhelms the civilian and justice organizations, the authorities should order the national defense system to plan a *campaign* that would start the *domestic LIC*.

The current criminality is no longer a probability (hypothesis) to advance to the category of an open unconventional LIC, either domestic or transnational. The confrontation is the clear expression of an operational problem that takes the shape of a micro-war conducted by the state. If the government refuses to start the conflict in order to preserve a public image that doesn't match the risk it is taking, it will lay bare an unquestionable incompetence and political weakness.

Low intensity conflicts have gotten worse since the dismembering of the bipolarity and have lodged in the global socio-political scenario. Curiously, they weren't very scrupulously scrutinized by Intelligence organizations and the tardy detection of the phenomenon caused the criminal directors to quickly put to test the legal capacities to contain such activities.

These laboriously identified confrontations are contaminating the states less prepared to detect internal dangers, at the same time the miscreants are pressuring the authorities to not execute laws that make their business uncomfortable. If governments decided to go ahead with a mini-war (*internal LIC*) as an energetic and bold repression of the major crime, they would deal very serious blows to the criminal corporations.

Some countries prefer to set aside political histrionics in order to proceed firmly, such as Colombia and Mexico, and on a lesser scale, Ecuador, Peru⁵ and Brazil. In other places, the governments prefer that only the police and ordinary justice resolve the operational problem that overwhelms them. The criminal groups feel more liberated when the administration uses methods that let them continue their criminal activities.

Apocalypse XXI

The title apocalyptic refers to the four *non-traditional threats* being treated and their servants, which carry out an intuitive parallel strategy. *Narcotraffic* exists because there is supply and demand supported by consumption and production. The illicit industry contracts with “soldiers of fortune” with military background that behave as skilled and trained *mercenary guerrilla fighters*.

In complement, the substances are transported to the places of consumption, and are broken up and sold. Such stages require the functioning of a large organization with its legal, technological and accounting services, plus an elite dishonest employer who administrates the corporation. That intricate network mobilizes the product, makes the delivery and collects enormous quantities of money.

Activities are carried out in the areas of influence dominated by *organized crime*, full of dozens of delinquents, salesmen and mafioso “soldiers” who defend the organization and its members, and who carry out operations with rules of engagement typical of the underworld. The recruitment of those individuals takes place in local and foreign hotbeds in such a way that many are provided through *illegal immigration*.

The Andean trio consisting of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru is a region where coca (cocaine) and poppies (opium, heroin) are cultivated, but currently they are exposed to

growing competition from synthetic drugs. For their part, Paraguay and Mexico furtively export tons of marijuana with the help of any means of transport, including submarines.

For this reason the *narcotraffic* crisis has transcended the hypothesis of conflict in order to become a diverse and real unconventional war, with the features and dimensions of a *domestic LIC*, open or covert. That statement will probably be evaluated with incredulity, but it should not surprise anyone since it is based on factors of omnipresent evidence.

Mexico, without officially recognizing the LIC, resorts to its armed forces to combat *organized crime*, its ramifications and consequences. The clashes with the enemy are intense and cause more casualties than some formal wars by the application of heterodoxical rules of engagement that principally use terror as an instrument. Not identifying an LIC by name does not avoid its development.

In Colombia and Peru, the authorities appeal to the armed forces with absolute conviction, since they understand perfectly the gravity of the operational problem. In Brazil there are periodic demonstrations of urban outbreaks for similar causes and in those circumstances the government convenes units of the military police and SFs (Special Forces), when the civilian forces for order are overwhelmed.

In countries where no one wants to talk about an *internal LIC*, they routinely activate the public services. But in the struggle one can appreciate the consequences of combating narco-operators with inappropriate resources and without long term plans to eradicate the global problem that subsists despite governmental will.

There are those who support this decision saying that there is no need to mix the military institutions with the corruption fomented by narcotraffic. But that argument also applies to other official agencies. The prevention of such acts is accomplished with implacable dissuasive and penalty standards effective throughout the entire nation. Equality before the law should not offend anyone.

Compliance with the law is an unassailable principle and regulatory standards must figure in the civil and military codes that preside over the work of institutions and the armed personnel. The current legal system acts at times like a secular biblical inventory

that must be faithfully respected by all citizens, both common and uniformed. To assume that corruption will invade the armed forces is a premature hypothesis that, suspected, tries to make excuses for the lack of participation in the repression of the paramilitaries. Someone who held this opinion said “he didn’t want the parking lot to become a Mercedes Benz auto exhibition.”

On the other hand, when the crisis breaks out, the legislative power has to plug legal breaches that would put obstacles before the defense and the fulfillment of the missions. That is to say, it must propose the laws that the justice department considers indispensable in order to wipe out the threat against the State and the society. The normative deficit not being resolved, the system will remain fragile unless the institutions proceed with determination and courage.

When the State has a laudable legal protection, it usually receives a barrage of protests and criticism from the resentful militants of the *facade*, *fellow travelers* and *useful idiots*, whose freedom of action is inconvenienced. The PSYOPS programs carried out by the cartels are partially approved by sectors of low cultural level. The danger rises when the government does not forcibly prosecute *organized crime*. While miscreants dominate the illicit business, the eradication of *narcotraffic* will be a fatuous intention.

To award the mission of eliminating *narcotraffic* exclusively to the institutions of the police and the common courts is to be unaware of the qualitative leap taken by such a threat, the creator of transnational and *domestic LICs*. Today, *narcotraffic* is in a position to hatch a minor unconventional war and the proof is empirical. If someone denies this, it is because he is closing his eyes to reality or is becoming complicit. Also, the use of drugs is cruel affects part of the human reserve of the defense, doubling the damage to the security of the country.

The frequent skirmishes produce a growing number of casualties and the main actors do whatever is necessary to systematically beat the records. We all know the events in Mexico, where some 10,000 victims⁶ have been counted during the undeclared LIC by the *narcotraffic*. I wonder how long it will still take Mexico to follow the footsteps of Colombia and make explicit the *de facto* situation it is living through, sincerely admitting the existence of the internal conflict, which demands a formal *campaign*.

When the armed forces enter into the action, they don't do it en masse. As happens in other LICs, limited quantities of SFs participate in the fight, sometimes accompanied by aerial COIN units that execute joint operations. In Colombia, the FAC has registered occasional outstanding successes with various bombings in guerrilla camps, which produced the death of Raúl Reyes (March 2008) and Jorge Briceño (September 2010), renowned FARC leaders. When the criminals are captured, they ask for the intervention of civil justice and resist extradition.

Therefore it is indispensable to have available a summary justice that abbreviates the judges' work. Some curious situations arise during the substantiation of the legal proceedings. One note, worthy of the Guinness Book of World Records, was the offer from the Colombian cartels, who went so far as to offer to pay off the national debt of the government in exchange for not being extradited to the USA.

Despite the objective evidence, analysts do not view the confrontation with Apocalypse XXI as an LIC. Sometimes the criminals try to keep their activities in the shadows. Discretion amounts to more security and freedom to act. Meanwhile, why not combat group XXI with the most appropriate methods, while the State builds a more friendly legal scenario?

Comparable statistics indicate that there is a favorable asymmetry for the country. However, the criminal hydra moves its various resources with perspicacity and lack of inhibition that allows it to deceive with partial and transitory balances. If the government would recognize such an LIC as an operational situation, it would obtain superior benefits.

In the architecture of the threat, *mercenary guerrillas* play the role of security guard for the *narcotraffic*, although originally the paramilitaries were not structured for this purpose. They are factions that normally have old ideological-political backgrounds, but changed their course for reasons of survival and greed. The best known examples are the Colombian FARC-ELN, a residual Peruvian Tupac Amaru-Shining Path and the "troops" of State Wa in the "golden triangle" of Myanmar-Thailand-Laos.

In Colombia, ex-President Alvaro Uribe directed the *domestic LIC* against the *narcotraffic* and the *guerrillas* until the end of his mandate. Today it is being continued by the currently mandated Juan Manuel Santos. However, their numerous successes are not

celebrated in the same way throughout the world, thanks to the disinformation spread by the delinquents' allies. The Colombian guerrillas changed their orientation when the Warsaw Pact stopped supplying and financing them via Cuba.

Those paramilitaries are still in a position to establish "controlled zones" in jungle regions. However, Intelligence reports denounce their inability to advance to the fourth phase of the subversive operational theory ("creation of liberated zones"). They are even less in a position to launch a fifth phase ("general insurrection") with a conventional army.

Regardless, they continue to declare a dying allegiance to diffuse political groups that grant them a less transgressive image, but there are few observers that allow them to be taken in. Overwhelmingly, the countries that adhere to the Treaty of Rome (1998) catalog the members of the politicized guerrillas as terrorists, who commit imprescriptible crimes against humanity.

The successful persecution of the FARC-ELN compels its current chiefs to search for new locations in adjacent countries, transferring guerrilla fighters and encampments to Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama. In face of the lack of enrollment *in situ*, they look for unoccupied troops and "soldiers of fortune" throughout the world, forming a true foreign legion in the service of *organized crime*. The FARC would have met with Shining Path in the Acre zone (border between Peru and Colombia) to discuss the drug trade and a potential settlement. The agreement could reinforce the squalid current units of the Shining Path, obliging the Peruvian government to accentuate the unofficial *internal LIC*.⁷

In the gloomy quartet, *organized crime* is like a grand C4I center (Command, Control, Communications, Computing, Intelligence) with numerous auxiliary services that take care of the more cerebral aspects of the business. When possible, this super large criminal state also feeds on other income. This versatile organization is also involved in gambling, contraband, the sex trade and money laundering, but none of them have the breadth of the drug trade.

Organized crime benefits from the use of fraud, counterfeiting, loopholes in the legal standards and also the use of terror, if necessary. In this way they manage to control large companies, both legal and illicit, that facilitate their structural expansion. This grand

operations center is managed by able businessmen protected by urban guerrillas who apply rules of engagement without ties to the moral criteria of the society.

To combat *organized crime*, theoretically the ideal force is the police, a valuable component of community defense. Curiously, this public institution possesses in its structure what the Soviets used to call a “parallel hierarchy”. In that era, the “political hierarchy” supervised another major one such as the “military hierarchy”. In the police almost worldwide, the modern controlling organization is Internal Affairs and it enjoys autonomy for overseeing that the operative units fulfill their mission within the confines of the law.

Violent acts in cities are executed by *mercenary guerrillas*, true-armed groups composed of the so-called “soldiers”. Their training for combat in populated areas enables them to form a disciplined unit that is prepared to intervene in a moderate *domestic LIC*. The fearsome “family wars” that emblematic sectors of the mafia underworld occasionally experience offer a partial view of what can happen if the “troops” and the offensive means of the guerrillas are reinforced.

The importance of some criminal corporations is of such a nature that can ostensibly be seen in the way the State operates. There are rumors that the Organizatsiya (Russian Mafia) has sufficient power to argue with the government and today would occupy the top spot in the criminal ranking. Following it are the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the Neapolitan Camorra, the Japanese Yakuza and the Chinese Triad.

In the waters off the “Horn of Africa” there are pirates so fierce that Canada, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, USA, Iran, China and Russia had to station war ships in the area. In 2009 there were attacks on 114 commercial vessels; 29 were captured and ransoms in the millions of dollars were paid. The strait of Malaca (SE Asia) required the cooperation of Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Thailand and Singapore to clear the sea of invaders. Right now, only Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia⁸ are handling this task.

When the State does not adopt severe standards against the delinquents due to debatable political and ideological criteria, the audacity of the threat grows. The negative effects show up in public life and stress the community, due to the insecurity generated

and fear. In the face of this situation, the people opt for shutting themselves away, visibly clouding the local social-economic life, or they react impulsively and take the law into their own hands. Then, “death squads” appear as a desperate solution from a beleaguered citizenship. Once the delinquents perceive that, due to bureaucratic apathy, ideology or inefficiency, the official response does not limit their operations, the frequency of their illicit forays increases.

The death penalty is definitive, for which reason it is rejected by humanistic entities. Despite that position, I would like to cite what the deceased American writer Mario Puzo⁹ expressed as an incentive for meditation. Profoundly knowledgeable about the Mafia, he wrote with impersonal eclecticism, “we don’t know if capital punishment is a deterrent, but we do know that the men who are executed will not kill again.”

If the government wants to resolve social disturbances with more pedagogical and paternalistic methods, direct action will be replaced by a less harsh discussion in the environment of a long-term project. This choice requires that various administrations continue the same political line over time, but no one can guarantee that will happen. Thus, the delinquents will continue to produce illicit acts that should be sanctioned without indulgence.

Finally, *organized crime* is a brotherhood of professional malefactors, who unite in a broad illicit association, with directors trained to understand powerful enterprises. The corporation works based on corruption rather than on the basis of the force of weapons and, therefore, that venal operative instrument indelibly stains the official and social agents who give in to the temptations. The gang interprets the cost of such acts as a tax levied on key people that will provide a juicy return in the form of benefits for the corrupters.

From another angle, the concentration of capital, automation, competence, technology and productivity are indirect factors that help to create currents of unemployed and impoverished people. In this way, a scenario takes shape from which surely future “soldiers” will come, recruited by *organized crime*.

No country wants to receive human groups full of problems that are hard to solve. If they need more people, the authorities want to select them according to their own standards, generally more rigorous for foreigners. In the face of such barriers, the only exit

for those less gifted is *illegal immigration*. Africa and Latin America are the principle providers of emigrants who decide to go to Europe and North America. While the world population is ageing in the advanced countries, in the Third World the birthrate and social anxieties are increasing. Consequently, it is advisable to foresee that the panorama will become darker as the century advances and the options are reduced.

The State alarm intensifies when the new residents distribute themselves around the metropolis and swell the pre-existing “misery belts” that threaten to overflow, causing them to intrude on the heart of the urban area. Some “pacifist” invaders occupy state and private lands. Others seek a better way of life and discover that *organized crime* can offer them a quick, although disreputable alternative.

This invasion is difficult to stop and even more so if the country of origin of the intruders intercedes in its defense, with which the LIC project can occur sooner than expected. These currents awaken xenophobic sentiments and force severe border protection, given that later expulsions are slow and controversial. The habitable areas of the planet are being reduced and it is calculated that by the middle of the century 70% of the world population will be accumulated in the cities, giving clear warning about what may happen with the migratory movements.

Ominous Days for the Defense

I think I have presented satisfactory evidence, confirming that *non-traditional threats* drive *domestic LICs*. Now I wonder when that reality will be recognized and stop being hidden with angelic political camouflages. Naturally, no one wants to stain his own public image with the inclemencies of a conflict, but it is not advisable to sweep the garbage under the rug. At some point the accumulation will make walking more difficult.

The transnationality is a factor that goes along with the sinister quartet under consideration, although at times it is seen as an internal affair; until a superficial analysis discovers connections that go beyond borders with a parallel and asymmetrical format. That feature favors the treatment of the conflict with pooled international groups, since it prejudices the interests of various states that can discuss a strategy made compatible with synergetic effects.

To attack *narcotraffic* without dislocating *organized crime* is absurd; to combat urban and rural *mercenary guerrillas* without separating them from *illegal immigration* is not profitable. But a combined *campaign* may be concise in eliminating external refuges, blocking the circulation of illicit products, cutting chemical supplies, making raids on “controlled zones” and truncating any *tactical retreat* of the opponent that impedes the paramilitary recuperation. A strategic project of this nature is not simple to construct, but the prize is very attractive.

However, a multinational agreement can fail if it does not take into account the replacement of the income of the cultivators who would stop planting poppies and coca. They are single crops that allow a large number of peasants to survive and if the State does not compensate for the absence of this harvest, the eradication of the crops will not be supported by the producers. It is a capital deduction.

In the guerrillas in the service of *narcotraffic*, ideology is not essential, because it is not fundamental to the tasks assigned to the “soldiers”. However, the historical chiefs are inclined to not completely fold up that flag. The political apparel of the paramilitaries facilitates contact with civil entities of other countries, governments and especially sectors of the *facade*, *fellow travelers* and *useful idiots*, who do not quit admiring and supporting the supposed idealists.

And If We Join Forces?

This idea is born of the well-known maxim “in unity there is strength” and it has angles worth exploring. The conflicts to resolve based on this assumption are characterized by their differences from classic conflicts, and also by the variety and features of the scenarios. Such details clash with the Cartesian education of the official planners, accustomed to handling concrete acts with an order that guides them to the decision. Instead, the non-traditional environments record continuous dialogues between uncertainty and instability that are reduced to a state of insecurity. It is the profile of the troubling operational climate, which the defense command has to face.

The factors mentioned are also indirectly influenced by the uncertain geographic location of the opponent, which explains the great elasticity of the limits. In *internal LICs*, there are all kinds of variables by virtue of the flexibility of its composition. Therefore, when

governments adopt a common strategy, the socialization of the defense enters a circle of friction motivated by the unequal opinions of the associates. In this case, the immutability of the objective will help to conciliate the proposals. It could be said that therein lies the most valuable nodule of the combined process.

Due to the irregularity of the transnational theater of war, differences in the rules of engagement will crop up frequently, putting to test the negotiated agreements between governments. The unified strategy to eradicate *non-traditional threats* will be defined as a compendium, articulating a lot of political, diplomatic and naturally defensive action. Sun Tzu comes to our aid in recommending discernment and ceding the secondary, in order to patiently insist on the main thing. With this purely logical statement and the initiative, the road to understanding and performance will be smoothed out.

In a multinational contract, the speed in reaching decisions diminishes due to the larger number of associates. With a smaller number of members, the debate over projects is less cumbersome. If you were to ask me to define a summarized proposal to extirpate *non-traditional threats*, I would postulate a combined and self-sufficient defense, in which logic prevails, the contractors contribute interoperable forces and equipment, a unified organization is approved and mutually approved rules of engagement are put in place.

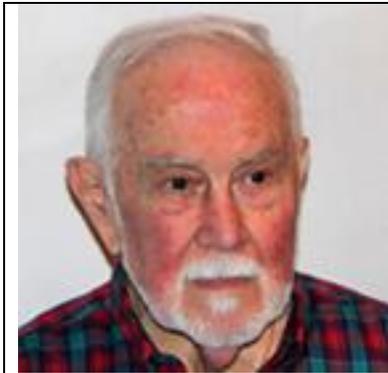
In practice, an agreement of this nature requires the uninterrupted operation of an international command, possessing personnel expert in the repression of such crimes, with rules of engagement that do not provoke disapproval, and the support of a meticulous legal system that fortifies the weaker flanks of the defense. The associated governments will take the more important step of accepting the evolution of the *domestic LIC*. Without this framework, the rest would be pure rhetoric.

Notes

1. See the aspects that conceptually determine a war, Chapter I, ASPJ, 3rd quarter, 2010.
2. Classic Aristotelian apothegm.
3. They are members of the Russian special forces of the Army and the Armada. In the era in which they fulfilled missions reserved for the USSR, the forces were conducted by the Directors of the Military Intelligence of the General Major State (GRU).

4. Also known as Jorge Briceño Suárez, he fell in the caves of La Macarena (Meta, Colombia) on the 22nd of September 2010 during an aerial bombing. The journalistic media attested to the existence of the watch.
5. Jane's Defense Weekly, Sept. 29, 2010, page 8.
6. Diary of the Nation, Buenos Aires, September 2010.
7. Idem 5. Although in Peru they don't officially fight in that unconventional conflict, in the jungle the armed forces trained in COIN do intervene. The political sincerity predominates over the name.
8. Various editions of Jane's Defense Weekly, 2009.
9. Mario Puzo is the author of "The Godfather". The thought cited above was written in his book "Fools Die", Penguin Group, 1978.

Contributer



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