

Use and Perception of Violence: A Girardian Approach to Asymmetric Warfare

Raphaël Baeriswyl

www.raphaelbaeriswyl.ch

This essay is based on a paper that I presented at a conference⁽¹⁾ organised by the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands on the “moral dimension of asymmetric warfare.” It combines René Girard’s theses on societal violence with the latest analyses of those modern conflicts which strategists call “asymmetric.” The Western military may find in Girardian anthropology an explanation for the accrued difficulty that they meet in their missions on modern battlefields. The application of René Girard’s theses to modern warfare provides anthropologists with further evidence of the validity of these theses. More broadly, this essay challenges the relativism that has developed in Western society over the last three centuries.

1 Introduction

In any case, my interest had been abstract, concerned with the theory and philosophy of warfare especially from the metaphysic side. Now, in the field everything had been concrete, particularly the tiresome problem of Medina; and to distract myself from that I began to recall suitable maxims on the conduct of modern, scientific war. But they would not fit, and it worried me.

T. E. Lawrence ⁽²⁾

Whereas, in the past, Western armed forces tended to see international humanitarian law (like the Geneva conventions) as a constraint that prevented them from defeating their adversaries, they are now noticing that compliance with humanitarian law (and even with moral standards higher than the minimum granted by humanitarian law) is not only of legal or moral, but of strategic significance. Soldiers of several Western countries are therefore specifically trained in solving ethical dilemmas⁽³⁾, which, in this respect, places armed forces ahead of most other employers.

The views expressed in this essay confirm the strategic importance of ethics and

morals in modern conflicts. The “moral dimension” is not just one of the *aspects* of asymmetric warfare (an epiphenomenon that—whatever importance it is lent—remains secondary to the operations conducted on the battlefield). It is also the very *core* of asymmetry, the stumbling block that Western armed forces (and states) keep underestimating and over which, consequently, they keep tripping. However, it is not in *morals* or *ethics* (as such) or in *law* (as such) that lies the key to asymmetry, but in the specificity of the *values* current in Western society. Thus this essay is not based on morals, but rather on axiology, which can be defined as the descriptive and factual study of values.

I will attempt to answer three questions: What is asymmetry? Why are asymmetric strategies successful? How can asymmetry be reduced? After working out the notion of asymmetry (2), we will try to find in the Western axiological reality the reason why asymmetric strategies work (3). On this basis, we will be in a position to discuss some measures likely to reduce asymmetry (4).

2 Asymmetry

2.1 Introduction

Western thought on strategy is traditionally governed by a *logic of capability*. The evolution of armament and strategy has been dominated by the following pattern: penetration by offensive means (sword, arrow, spear, shell, etc.) has dictated the resistance to be put up by defensive means (breast-plate, shield, armour, ramparts, etc.) and, in return, the resistance of defensive means has led to the development of more powerful offensive means.

Our history of war has been dictated by the capability of armament, not only in terms of quantity, but also of quality: the effectiveness of a weapon system depends as much on its technical capabilities as on the doctrine of its engagement. Possession of better weapons has never been considered the only key to success. When Swiss peasants massacred the Austrian cavalry in Morgarten in 1315, the logic of capability could explain that the knowledge and use of the terrain had been the decisive factor in favour of the Swiss, and that cavalry, as seen again in Agincourt in 1415, is vulnerable when it cannot develop its speed in a massive, frontal, charge. Also, the logic of capability easily explains that Goliath was killed by David because he underestimated his skill at the sling (the psychological element, which is not unknown to strategists, influences the capability of the combatants) and because of the advantage conferred by a throwing weapon.

Western armed forces are confronted nowadays with situations which may look similar but are governed by a different logic. Let us consider for instance the duel

(of which we all have been a witness one time or the other by watching television) between, on one side, a modern Israeli tank, fit for a fight against a fire-and-forget third-generation anti-tank guided missile, and, on the other side, a Palestinian teenager with a stone in his hand. The great novelty in the history of war is that the outcome of this duel does not depend on a logic of capability. The teenager cannot destroy or even damage the tank and he can hardly hurt any of the crew in the tank. On the other side, the crew in the tank have various means to kill or injure the teenager or they could have him arrested, but what ever they decide to do, they are likely to lose the duel. And, if they kill the teenager (which would be the best solution in terms of capability), Israel is more likely to lose the war in which it is involved.

The term “asymmetric warfare” appeared around 1993⁽⁴⁾. It spread rapidly within the world of strategic analysis, and from there into the media. But in spite of its unquestionable popularity, its meaning is still obscure. In a reality as protean and unstable as war—as in any irregular shape—it is easier to see asymmetries than symmetries. Any straight line indeed that goes through an irregular shape constitutes one of this shape’s axes of asymmetry. All these possible asymmetries can be sorted by their relevance: some must be random or based on contingent observations, whereas other are more telling. We are looking for the most telling theory of asymmetry, the one, in Popperian terms, “which best holds its own in competition with other theories ; the one which, by natural selection, proves itself the fittest to survive”⁽⁵⁾.

2.2 Traditional approaches to asymmetry

Traditional approaches⁽⁶⁾ to asymmetry are mainly based on the old Western logic of capability. Some of these approaches focus on the disparity in the means engaged by the belligerents (“asymmetry in means”). The idea is that the weaker party, knowing that it would not weather a frontal clash, avoids direct confrontation and concentrates its efforts on actions mainly based on surprise and directed against soft targets. For instance, the insurrectionary adversary takes cover in inhabited zones, mixing with the population, and organises opportunistic attacks against targets that appear momentarily accessible (for instance, a patrol).

Other approaches put special emphasis on the nature of the belligerents. Modern conflicts—as far as they interest Western countries—set usually regular forces against irregular forces (“asymmetry in identities”). While regular forces are characterised by a transparent structure (uniform, hierarchy, weaponry), irregular forces are by nature extremely evanescent. It is normally difficult to know whether an individual is a member of the population or of the troops. Most combatants are part-time combatants: they take part in the fights more or less spontaneously (it can happen

that the insurrectional force themselves do not know their members), on a more or less regular basis, and spend the rest of the time as ordinary members of their social community. As the question arises from this evanescence as to whether or not international conventions should (and can in practice) be applied to irregular forces, some analysts point out that insurrectional forces are more likely to use unfair methods without being bothered for so doing (fair vs unfair methods–“legal asymmetry”).

A disparity in interests can also be detected. The idea is that, in a modern conflict between a Western state and another regular or irregular force, what is at stake does not involve any of the vital interests of the Western state. This means that the Western state will not be willing to win at any price, whereas the weaker party is more likely to be driven on by its interest, or even by despair. For instance, in 1993, the United States hurriedly left Somalia after 18 of its rangers were killed in an attack at Mogadishu, which raises some questions about the American interest in having an armed presence in Somalia.

These traditional approaches to asymmetry are not lacking in common sense and are based on sound observation. But their explanatory power is not particularly striking. As already suggested by the examples given above, the asymmetry in means is not new, and the history of war is to a great extent the history of asymmetric means (colonial or indigenous wars, peasant uprisings). To avoid the strengths of the enemy and to strike him where he is unprepared is simply one of the first principles in warfare, as already taught by Sun Tzu. Similarly, the use of cunning or unfair methods is not new (“all warfare is based on deception”[\(7\)](#)–Sun Tzu ; “*inter arma enim silent leges*”[\(8\)](#)–Cicero) and deciding whether dropping sticks of bombs on Hamburg, Vietnam or Baghdad is fair or unfair probably depends on one’s location. The main question which remains unanswered is why asymmetry was previously not considered as big a problem as it seems nowadays. It is worth remembering indeed that most conquests of the Western colonial nations were happening in conditions that should be called asymmetric following the traditional strategists. But these asymmetric conditions did not prevent expeditionary forces from fighting successfully and from coming back home covered in glory. There is a crucial point that traditional strategic analysis is missing.

2.3 Asymmetric Warfare or the Victor Defeated (Jacques Baud)

The more destruction I see, the stronger I get. -Yasser Arafat
Jacques Baud’s theories, as set out in *La Guerre asymétrique ou la défaite du vainqueur* [Asymmetric Warfare or the Victor Defeated], are based on a strategic, overall view of warfare. They stand out from anything that has ever been written on asymmetry and are the only ones that justify the argument that asymmetric conflict should be

considered a new type of conflict, and one to which strategists should apply a new way of thinking, a new logic.

2.3.1 The notions of “space of operations” “battle space” and “human space”

Jacques Baud notices that security questions, formerly confined to the “battlefield,” have spread offshoots out of the tridimensional space and that they fill nowadays a space not only physical, a space which he calls the “*space of operations*.”

This extension from the battlefield to the space of operations can be followed historically. Wars until the beginning of the 20th century were fought in the *topographic space* (land and sea), to which the *airspace* was added during the first world war. Topographic space and airspace make up the tridimensional space, in which actions are conducted physically. During the second world war the space of operations extended to the ether (or *electromagnetic space*), which is the domain of electronic warfare, and it comprises now also *cyberspace*, where digital information circulates, and *infospace*, where opinions are manipulated. Finally, whereas all previous extensions of the space of operations had been mere consequences of technical progress, the conflicts that followed the second World War suddenly revealed the importance of the *human space*, the knowledge of which has become the key to understanding any modern conflict.[\(9\)](#)

Jacques Baud defines the human space as the space of human life and action, with its cultural, social, economic, moral and political dimensions, where networks are woven, loyalties and hierarchies disputed and opinion and determination forged. It is the space in which political action takes shape and violence develops.[\(10\)](#)

The space of operations is divided into six battle spaces that are all governed by their own rules: topographic space, airspace, electromagnetic space, cyberspace, infospace, and human space. Although each of these battle spaces may be singled out to allow analysis, they form a continuum and are interdependent. An action carried out in one of the battle spaces can have an impact on any of the other battle spaces. This is how the “blunder” of a soldier, although committed in the topographic space in the execution of a tactical routine mission, is immediately relayed at strategic level through the infospace and becomes a strategic problem which may require a response from the highest political level.[\(11\)](#)

2.3.2 The essence of asymmetry

Whereas traditional strategic analysts see asymmetry in the disparity in means or identity of the belligerents, Jacques Baud considers that modern conflicts are asymmetric because the belligerents do not set their objectives in the same battle

space.

Classic wars were symmetric because the objectives of both parties were set in the same battle spaces: topographic space, airspace and electromagnetic space. A modern, high intensity conflict between two (groups of) Western states would probably be symmetric as both states would set their objectives in all of the six battle spaces. In any case, Western forces are still trained to fight in wars in which both parties struggle for superiority in the same battle spaces.

Modern conflicts show a very different picture. Whereas the institutional party (Western state on its own behalf or on behalf of the United Nations) still sets its main objectives in the traditional battle spaces (topographic space, airspace, electromagnetic space), the insurrectional force sets its main objectives in the infospace and the human space.

One of the first asymmetric wars was the Vietnam war, which saw the United States deploy a technology without precedent and obtain convincing tactical results in South Vietnam (topographic space, airspace, electromagnetic space), while the Soviet Union and China were waging a background war in the Western world (infospace, human space), in accordance with the overall notion of war developed by Marxist-Leninist ideology⁽¹²⁾. As pointed out by some analysts, “while the Americans had real success on Indochinese territory, North Vietnam (with the help of the Soviet Union and China) mobilised Western public opinion and achieved success in Europe and on the American university campuses.”⁽¹³⁾ A similar observation (although not based on asymmetry) is made by Rupert Smith about the fight of the French against the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale: winning the battle in military terms did not prevent the French from losing Algeria⁽¹⁴⁾. What distinguishes asymmetric from symmetric wars is that in asymmetric wars the outcome of the fighting on the battlefield is not the decisive element.

According to Jacques Baud, Western armed forces are prevented by their ethnocentrism and the long tradition of their logic of capability from understanding the logic of their adversaries: “While classic wars are built around a power struggle, with strategic objectives of material nature (conquest of territory or destruction of the adversary), asymmetric conflicts take their shape from another way of running wars, with strategic objectives of immaterial nature and with an emphasis on legitimacy”⁽¹⁵⁾. Western armed forces are therefore at risk of misunderstanding what is really at stake for their adversaries.

Jacques Baud points out in this respect that in non Western cultures, the notion of victory does not necessarily involve crushing one's adversary. In some Islamic societies for instance, victory is rather linked with the act of resisting than with the

outcome of a fight. In particular, meeting death in the defence of Islam elevates the individual. Accepting such death is neither a defeat nor a desertion, but an act of courage directed to a higher objective of spiritual nature: the martyr (shaheed) goes to heaven and because his choice reflects the values of his community, his family is shown respect(16). Such ideas may sound irrelevant from a Western perspective, but it is a mistake on the part of strategists to ignore this reality. This is how, far from improving their situation, the Israeli defence force weakens it every time one of their snipers eliminates a Palestinian riot leader. Thinking in terms of capability, they believe that their enemy is weaker now that it has lost one man (the justification being that an eliminated riot leader is no longer able to commit a suicide attack). But in reality they help their enemy grow stronger by creating martyrs and giving a meaning to the fight of the young Palestinians(17). Similar strategic situations can occur when Western forces are facing non violent movements (according to Gandhi, “there is no such thing as defeat in non-violence”(18)) or the adepts of philosophies that place honour higher than life (the philosophy of the Samurais, according to which “honour comes first,”(19) without any doubt inspired the Japanese kamikaze pilots during the second World War).

The strict distinction between peace and war, which is known in the Western world, is foreign to other strategic traditions. In the Western world, war is still considered the continuation of politics by other means (Clausewitz). These words are not only one of the favourite quotations of Western strategists, they have also—as they focus on means—an important impact on our security. On the one hand, they imply that anything imposed by the West on other countries with means other than weapons is deemed to be peaceful in spite of the cultural damage that may be caused to foreign identities. On the other hand, any violent attack on Western interests is deemed to be a war if an armed response should be possible. This is how (a) the attack of 9/11 was called an “act of war,” (b) any aircraft after 9/11 was—logically (if a war is defined by the means used)—upgraded to the status of a weapon of mass destruction, and (c) the only conceivable answer to the attacks appeared to be to send troops to Afghanistan and Iraq.

The response of Western states to terrorism, according to Jacques Baud, leads to asymmetric conflicts because terrorism does not have a purpose of destruction. Terrorists do not set their objectives in the topographic space and airspace, where Western countries inevitably choose to confront them. The destruction of symbolic buildings and the killing of civilians are tragically real, but they have no tactical significance: it is not about weakening the adversary in terms of capability. Jacques Baud writes that “despite every indication to the contrary, asymmetric strategies do not set themselves the objective to maximise violence, but to deliver a pain ‘just sufficient’ to provoke an ‘over-reaction,’ by playing on image and emotional impact. Thus, the fight can be brought into another space than the field in which action

takes place.”(20) What matters in modern asymmetric conflicts is not the military engagement that takes place on the battlefield, but the ability to exploit such military engagement in the human space. It is in the human space therefore, and no longer on the battlefield, that modern wars are won or lost.

Let us consider some sequences from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to illustrate Jacques Baud’s theory. On 28 March 2003, an Iraqi officer wearing civilian clothes killed in a suicide bombing four American soldiers who were patrolling not far from Najaf. This suicide attack, which was among the first of a still ongoing series, left the troops very nervous and led them to take no chances. Three days after the attack, American soldiers shot dead “*at least*” (so the media) seven Iraqi civilians whose vehicle had failed to stop at a checkpoint(21). On 19 November 2005 in Haditha, a roadside bomb went off under a Humvee and killed or injured American soldiers. For reasons still unknown, American soldiers who had survived the attack entered nearby houses and killed several civilians. A very similar situation happened on 4 March 2007 in Jalalabad (Afghanistan) when US soldiers killed 12 civilians (including children and elderly people). None of these situations would have been even mentioned in the international media were it not for the massacre of civilians. What reveals the asymmetry of these situations is not the suicide bombing by an officer in civilian clothes, or the use of roadside bombs in inhabited zones. It is the fact that the loss at tactical level of American soldiers is of lesser strategic significance than the killing of civilians. In Najaf, Haditha and Jalalabad, what leads the United States to defeat is not the loss of its soldiers, but the fact that its soldiers killed civilians(22).

One may ask whether or not provocation corresponds to a conscious strategy of the irregular forces confronting a regular force: beyond the losses caused by their attacks, do the strategists of irregular forces really want to trigger indiscriminate reactions by the regular forces? On the one hand, the answer to this question may seem irrelevant: whether the provocation is conscious or not, this possibly unintentional “strategy” is effective and very dangerous for the regular forces. To be more precise: the strategic situation is dangerous, because regular and irregular forces are not on equal footing in terms of public expectations. On the other hand, however, if public opinion knew that the provocation is conscious and part of a strategy that aims at causing victims among the civil population, the image of the belligerents could change, to the advantage of the regular forces.

The practice of driving the regular forces to committing blunders is too widespread and too successful to be considered accidental. Based on Jacques Baud’s model, my understanding of asymmetric conflicts is that from anti-globalisation demonstrations to terrorism, those who challenge the strong are in pursuit of the right balance between the weakness necessary to become the favourite of Western

public opinion and the weakness tolerated in non-Western traditions or anarchist circles. The aim of asymmetric strategies is to provoke the violence that will allow the challenger to be seen as a victim in Western public opinion and as a hero in his own reference system. And so we attain the following balance: the greater the violence provoked, the stronger the position of the challenger. Yasser Arafat was perfectly right when he stated in May 2002 among the ruins of Ramallah: *"The more destruction I see, the stronger I get."* Let us now see what this model achieves when applied to reality.

2.3.3 Anti-globalisation demonstrations (Geneva 2003)

Anti-globalisation demonstrations all belong to a global, long-term scheme. The following observations are based on the demonstrations held in Geneva in June 2003 during the G8 Summit of Evian.

To begin with, the various protest forces within the demonstration grouping should be distinguished from each other. I will classify them according to their tolerance of violence:

- Peaceful demonstrators rejecting categorically any recourse to violence as a means of communication. They show their support for a cause merely by their presence. They respect the law and comply with the injunctions of the police forces.
- Agitators cultivating ambiguity about their tolerance of violence. They tend to conceive freedom of expression as inseparable from the exercise of a power of nuisance(23). They are often at the head of, or militate actively for, left wing contestation movements(24).
- Rioting demonstrators taking advantage of the gathering and the climate of protest occasioned by the demonstration to commit acts of vandalism. The pleasure of committing acts of violence against possessions (or people) overcomes possible ideological considerations.

Anti-globalisation protest strategy is based on a self-feeding process that can be broken down into two stages: the creation of antagonism followed by the provocation and exploitation of violence.

From the organising stage of an anti-globalisation demonstration onwards, the agitators endeavour to establish the idea of antagonism between the police forces and the peaceful demonstrators. In Geneva, the planning of the operation was overshadowed by the memories of Seattle (WTO ministerial conference in 1999), Göteborg (UE Summit in June 2001), and Genoa (G8 Summit in July 2001), which prompted the government to be careful: the presence of rioting demonstrators appeared very likely. Even though no one could seriously believe that the police

forces would be given the mission to prevent peaceful demonstrators from demonstrating (but on the contrary would *allow* them to demonstrate by protecting them against the rioting demonstrators), the agitators who had been included in the planning of security as leaders of protest movements asked for a “de-escalation of the police security operation”(25). They issued statements of concern about the police forces exerting repressive force on the peaceful demonstrators, put in place a legal unit to assist the peaceful demonstrators who would be victims of police violence and, to emphasise the gravity of the threat, recalled “the police violence that had accompanied the summit in 2001 in Italy and led to the death of young demonstrator Carlo Giuliani”(26). The objective of such reasoning was obviously to make the peaceful demonstrators believe that anyone of them was at risk of being killed by the police forces. But Carlo Giuliani, who was shot by a police officer acting in self-defence, does not qualify as a peaceful demonstrator under our (or any other reasonable) definition(27). After the G8 summit of Evian (and the riots in Geneva), an activist of Attac Neuchâtel, by the name Tomaso, was convicted on a charge of rioting. According to the police, Tomaso had admitted his taking part in a riot: “First he contested the facts. But when he was confronted with the amateur video in which he is to be seen in action, he finally admitted the obvious.”(28) After Tomaso’s conviction on the base of clear evidence, Attac Neuchâtel argued that the notion of riot is a “notion that legally does not mean anything” (“riot” is however the heading of section 260 of the Swiss Criminal Code) and that the judgment endangered the freedom of expression of all peaceful demonstrators, who were urged to sign a call for protest(29). This is how the agitators try, with some success, to give credence in the long run to the idea that the police forces (and the state) are opposed to the peaceful demonstrators. Police forces become thus the visible symbol for this enemy that anti-globalisation ideology has such difficulty identifying.

The climate thus created is propitious for the asymmetric strategy itself. Provoking violence with subtlety requires borderline situations the occurrence of which must be ensured in the early stages of planning, a time that already reveals “the ambiguous positions of the demonstrators [read: agitators]: they proclaim that they do not want to carry out any violent actions nor to enter security areas, but Mr. de Marcellus [read: an agitator] mentions actions of civil disobedience intending to disturb if not to prevent, on Swiss territory, the smooth functioning of the Summit. . . . Agreeing on unequivocal rules will be difficult.”(30) Most interestingly, Micheline Spoerri(31) noticed acts of provocation during the encounters of the police forces with the demonstration grouping: “No distraction is allowed, for I know that it is not over. I have the very unpleasant feeling to be facing, among the crowd of demonstrators, leaders who have decided to drive the police to committing a mistake, to keep playing their dangerous games.”(32) “The FSL [for Forum Social lémanique ; read: the agitators] persist in their destabilising activities. Throughout the day, their decision to demonstrate in defiance of the demonstration ban holds

my Department spellbound. They threaten to gather here, then somewhere else. In the middle of the afternoon, a few individuals spurred on by bad intentions want to spread disorder and provoke a tragedy at any price.”(33)

Provocation, in Geneva, did not bear fruit. We will try to analyse later the reasons for this. But the act of provocation itself reveals the ambiguity of the agitators’ position on the matter of violence. It helps understand that the reason why the agitators accept the presence of rioting demonstrators in the allegedly peaceful demonstrations that they organise is that they need them. Only rioting demonstrators are able to efficiently provoke police violence, this violence which gives its full meaning to the fight of anti-globalisation protesters and which allows them to feed their mythology. The most surprising fact is that, once injured or killed, rioting demonstrators are considered martyrs to a cause they have never supported: non-violence(34). Why indeed do the agitators, who proclaim themselves non-violent, not disassociate themselves from the “Carlo Giuliani” or “Tomaso” method, and why do they insist on having these people considered peaceful demonstrators? The agitators’ skill at exploiting violence in their favour regardless of the facts is simply prodigious.

From a strategic point of view, it is essential to understand that the police forces have a threefold relationship with the anti-globalisation demonstrators: a partnership and relationship of protection with the peaceful demonstrators, the relationship of an asymmetric conflict with the agitators, and the relationship of a symmetric conflict with the rioting demonstrators.

The task of the police forces is to protect persons and goods. Rioting demonstrators devote themselves to the pleasure of breaking and setting fire to shop windows and cars and of threatening the life and health of persons (members of the police forces, but also the occupants of the buildings set alight and passersby caught in street violence). The agitators wish to provoke the violence that will give a meaning to their fight. The difficulty of the task of the police forces lies in the fact that if they want to fulfil their tactical mission (which is to protect persons and goods), they have to resort to force and are likely in so doing—even though in self-defence—to hurt people (rioting demonstrators, possibly peaceful demonstrators or passersby). Now, the announcement of a serious injury or of a casualty triggers in the human space (media, public opinion, political world) a wave of reactions that questions the whole police system and puts the police forces in a situation of strategic defeat. If an injury or casualty occurs, the agitators are triumphant because they had forecast that the police forces would commit such acts of violence. And it is far from the fun of the rioting demonstrators and from the work of the police forces, in the human space, a place for emotions, that the agitators reap the fruits of their machinations, putting on airs of apostles of non-violence and stating vigorously that they will not

give up their fight. Experience shows that they forget very easily the true violent nature of their martyrs.

If provocation does not work, as was the case in Geneva, the outcome for the agitators is less brilliant: “As the days went by, the Forum Social Lémanique (FSL) lost their credibility; the population had understood that one should not confuse freedom of expression . . . with the will to impose one’s views at the risk of other people’s lives.”⁽³⁵⁾ However, the strategic defeat of the agitators is in close connection with the symmetric defeat of the police forces (as they let considerable damage be caused without intervening).

2.3.4 Israeli intervention against Hizballah on Lebanese territory (July-August 2006)

Analysts looking into the recent intervention of the Israeli defence force on Lebanese territory, after Hizballah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, confine generally their analyses to observations of tactical nature. The notion of asymmetry (in its traditional sense) is used to point out the disparity in the technology of the opposing forces and in the nature of the belligerents (Hizballah not being a state, which leads to an “asymmetry in identities”). The usefulness of high tech armed forces is reappraised after the Israeli defence force seemed unable to get rid of an adversary poorly equipped by comparison. This approach is interesting as it has the merit of highlighting a deadlock. However, it does not allow to understand what led Israel and Tsahal into deadlock, nor how the deadlock could be broken.

Let us apply Jacques Baud’s model and ask ourselves where the asymmetry of this conflict really lies. The mission of the Israeli defence force (as portrayed by the media) was of tactical nature: it was about hitting the capacity of Hizballah on Lebanese territory so as permanently to prevent it from threatening Israel. The mission was a purely military one (whatever the nature of the adversary, regular force or independent militia). Hizballah fought against the Israeli defence force following an initial gambit which obviously did not aim at having control over the territory (it was not about holding any place), but which aimed at inflicting losses on the Israeli defence force whenever possible. Adopted by a lightly armed force without armoured troops nor air support, this tactic corresponded rather to a necessity than a real choice. However, nothing asymmetric so far.

I consider that Hizballah set its strategic objectives in three distinct parts of the human space: Lebanese public opinion, Arabic (and more widely Muslim) public opinion, and Western public opinion. The objectives of Hizballah were brilliantly achieved and this success was no accident.

In Lebanon, the conflict allowed Hizballah to stand out as the only force able to

oppose Israel and to defend the national territory against a foreign incursion. It is beyond doubt that this conflict will help Hizballah strengthen its political position at national level. Reports at the beginning of September 2006 confirmed already its increasing popularity, whereas the legitimacy of the national government has been increasingly questioned henceforth. In this respect, the increased presence of the United Nations itself seems to prove the government's inability to govern without the support of the West (which is one of Hizballah's major points).

In the Arabic and Muslim world, Hizballah emerges as the heroic movement that not only resists the oppressor (Israel, and, by cultural extension, America), but is able to hold the enemy in check. The foreign supporters of Hizballah, in particular Syria and Iran, will not forget their protégé.

But it is in Western public opinion that Hizballah dragged Tsahal to defeat, by attracting Israel into a war which would necessarily cause casualties. On this terrain, the bombing of Cana (29 July 2006), with an initial toll of 56 dead later reduced to 28, half of which were children, was probably terminal to Israel, in spite of Hizballah's low popularity rating in Western societies. This incident was abundantly commented on in international opinion and very efficiently advertised by Hizballah itself(36). The dissatisfaction of Israeli public opinion with the conduct of the war (but not with its principle) seems to have played a determining role in the decision of giving up the fighting. Weakened on the international scene, Israel faced after the war internal tensions,(37) which have probably contributed to the unprecedented judicial difficulties encountered in the meantime by some of its ministers.

The victory of Hizballah did not owe much to classical military skills, but was only possible because, in the human space (Western public opinion), killing a civilian is strategically more harmful than losing a soldier. Was the kidnapping of these two Israeli soldiers a conscious provocation? What respective parts do strategy and luck play in this conflict that brought such success to Hizballah? Hassan Nasrallah stated on 27 August 2006 that his party would not have captured the Israeli soldiers, had it known that this action would lead to a "*war of such scale*"(38). But could he pretend anything different? I consider that even if the provocation was not conscious, the outcome of the conflict does not owe anything to luck, but only to the configuration of the human space, which, in our time and for reasons that we will try understanding, makes impossible any military solution to the problem that Hizballah represents for Israel.

2.3.5 Anomaly in the Western human space

Since the second World War, Westerners no longer tolerate

manifestations of power. . . . People consider any aggressive behaviour an insult and any aggressor some sort of lunatic.

Anatoli Karpov [\(39\)](#)

If human space is the space where regular forces win or lose modern conflicts, its understanding becomes as important as ballistics and any other traditional military discipline. Western pluralist society is the huge sound box that echoes and spreads any information from the battlefield. And it is in this highly charged human space, in which every blunder provokes an uproar, that the outcome of war hangs in balance. When a Palestinian teenager is facing an Israeli tank with a stone in his hand, does anyone in the Western world want that the teenager be killed?

It is not on the battlefield that things have changed. What has changed is that, since the Vietnam War, the Western citizen is sitting in his TV lounge and looking at the battlefield, thanks to technical innovations, but also—above all—thanks to the freedom of the press, the freedom of opinion, and the freedom of speech. The involvement of population leads to apply to war the standards of Western democracy and to judge war by these standards. The multiplicity of legitimate interests (which is the meaning of pluralism) has weakened as never before the “reasons of state,” a concept which after being the key to so many conquests and the excuse for so many crimes, has now become almost ineffective.

Just after the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from Lebanese territory, the predominant sentiment in Israeli opinion was that Israel would have won if the army had been allowed to “pulverise Hizballah”[\(40\)](#). This assessment is crucial and it applies to any asymmetric conflict: Western armed forces have the capability (on the battlefield), but they are not allowed (in the human space), to pulverise their adversaries.

Jacques Baud notices the existence of this problem in the human space of Western societies, as can be seen in the following passages: “Communication, information and the sharp eye of the media condition to a large extent the way of conducting wars. . . . The real “asymmetry” is a result of the evolution in society and its standards rather than in fighting methods.”[\(41\)](#) “The war capabilities exist, but our reluctance to make use of them is the real obstacle. . . . In Western democratic societies, the legitimacy of action cannot be ignored and tends to prevail over the effectiveness of the operations, whereas it could be more easily manipulated in the past.”[\(42\)](#) “The real difference with modern conflicts is that wars took place far from the concerns of Western public opinion. . . . The response from military forces or from the forces of law and order was not restricted by public opinion.”[\(43\)](#)

After working out the notion of asymmetry and before examining the question as to

how Western countries should reduce asymmetry, let us now determine *why* asymmetric strategies are successful at all.

3 Western values: the axiological roots of asymmetric warfare

Asymmetric strategies owe their success to the configuration of the human space and in particular to the topography of the world of values (or axiological world). This is why knowing the axiological terrain is as important as knowing the tridimensional space.

3.1 Discovering the relief of the axiological world

Values are fashionable. The “moral crisis” or “ethical crisis” is mentioned as a cause—at least a partial one—for any social problem, whereas the frantic creation of “codes of ethics” and “ethical committees” seems to confirm the rumour of a “return of ethics.” Is this abundant talking about values only a “probably aborted attempt at taking over in words what has really been lost in the minds”[\(44\)](#)? That values should be defended by committees and codified in sacred texts cannot speak for their vigour. The importance that values have acquired in contemporary thought and speech is a sign of a time axiologically confused.

Western society has the image of the world of values which its intellectual tools are able to capture. This is why the “moral crisis” is first of all a crisis of rationality. Unlike natural sciences (which have repudiated since the early decades of the 20th century the inheritance of Hume and his disciples), human sciences still have not freed themselves from the trap that subjectivism had set for them. Whereas natural sciences owe their undeniable success to the rediscovery of the notion of truth[\(45\)](#) and to the achievements of an “epistemology without a knowing subject”[\(46\)](#), human sciences still broadly reject the idea of objective existence of reality, of truth as correspondence to the facts, and of the ability of man to discover reality.

The main stream of all who speak about values still profess that “value judgments are subjective”[\(47\)](#) and that they cannot therefore be the subject of any critical (scientific[\(48\)](#)) discussion nor any comparison. Such presupposition necessarily tends to favour the idea that all values are equivalent, as it rules out any distinction, classification, or ranking. And this is how, persuaded that all values are the same, our society sees the world of values as a totally flat landscape. Which explains plainly why, confused, it is struggling for points of reference: flat landscapes do not offer any points of reference.

This illusory picture of a uniformly flat landscape became still clearer and thus more deceptive when Communism collapsed in Europe. Following the Hegelian and Marxist dialectic, according to which historical progress is the predetermined result

of a fight between ideologies, Francis Fukuyama announced that with the end of the Cold War humanity had reached a definitive consensus on liberal democracy and he proclaimed, as early as 1989, the End of History(49). This thesis was broadly disseminated and extremely well received in the mentality of the 1990's. It was granted—in this time's compulsory optimism—that “the Open Society [had] no more enemies that could be taken seriously. Its victory [was] complete, total”(50), as Peter Gross put it. This author, however, who mentions Karl Popper's “Open Society,” should have noticed that he was committing that same mistake of Hegel and Marx (and so many others) as is denounced precisely in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*[first published 1945], the second volume of which is entitled *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath*. According to Karl Popper himself, the belief in historical destiny is sheer superstition and the prediction of the course of history cannot be based on any scientific or other rational method(51). Recent history has not falsified this theory.

The attacks of 9/11 projected a new oblique light on the world of values and under the influence of this light the world of values revealed its relief, much more uneven than Western society would have thought. Even more than the mere facts, their interpretation by the Western mind reveals, in its axiocentrism, the rifts which opened in our perception of the world. Contrary to what the Western perspective might suggest and proving the first analyses wrong, the perpetrators of the attacks on 9/11 in New York and Washington (and on 11 March 2004 in Madrid and 7 July 2005 in London): (a) were not lacking in resources or social perspectives, even by Western standards, (b) had not been pressured into acting through threats against their families, and (c) nothing indicates that their families received money(52).

The choices made by suicide bombers clearly obey other criteria than those usual in our society. They express other priorities and reflect other values. It is very tempting for the Western mind to disqualify the values of suicide bombers. Indeed, the Western mind is very fond of the even landscape of which it thinks the world of values consists. And in order to preserve this even landscape, Western society prefers to throw suicide bombers altogether out of the world of values saying that they have *no values* and ranking them, at best, among the nihilists.

But other surprises—of lesser amplitude—have crumpled the smooth surface of our axiological landscape. Although less extreme than the suicide bomber's attitude, these surprises may be more unsettling since they do not lead as easily to the disqualification of the values that they disclose. These surprises relate on the one hand to the integration of Muslim population in Western (essentially European) countries: a considerable part of the Muslim population of Western countries would prefer to live under *sharia* law(53); Muslim intellectuals considered moderate stand up for the application of *sharia* law(54); wearing ostentatious signs of religious

belonging, or attendance at physical education are questions often raised in every school. And on the other hand, these surprises undermine the confidence of the West as to the aspirations of other peoples: against all expectations, Hamas won the Palestinian elections on 25 January 2006(55). The “post-Christian” attitude of abandoning any religious feeling and judging everything in terms of individualism, hedonism, and wealth is obviously not appealing to other cultures.

These events give rise to questions in a Western society convinced that its model is the only possible one and that every person should necessarily want to subscribe to it. This questioning hits Western society right in the heart of its convictions, in the heart of what it has been thinking for so long was not worth worrying about: what is the origin of Western secular values? what is the foundation of democracy? what is the place of religion in society and state? These questions challenge the values of our society and shake up all our intellectual habits.

Uneven though I see the relief of the axiological world, I do not believe that this relief will necessarily lead to a clash of civilisations. But it is unfortunately likely to do so if the Western mind keeps denying the relief and therefore keeps omitting to explore the world of values. This knowledge, in any event, is necessary for strategic analysis.

3.2 Axiology and the concept of “value”

Most philosophers who write about values are obsessed with the metaphysical question of the origin of values(56) to such extent that values seem to have no proper existence but only to depend upon their origin. This attitude makes any debate on values impossible, because the origin of values is probably the *ultimate* question (and, thus, not the first to be dealt with) as far as ethics or morals is concerned, the metaphysical question that defies rational criticism and escapes prehension by science(57). I consider it necessary to proclaim the independence of values and to free the notion of value from any metaphysical or moral presupposition. For any such presupposition (be it religious, lay, philosophical, or atheistic) is likely to hinder the rational discussion of values and the exploration of the axiological world. There is a truth about morals as there is a truth about all reality. But my approach does not aim—for this is not necessary—at comparing the *morality* of axiological systems, or at determining on what view of the world axiological systems may be *based*, but only at observing whether axiological systems differ from each other and if so, in what extent. Let us try, on this basis, to define the notion of value.

My proposition is as follows: a value is a criterion for decision-making(58). Values organise themselves into autonomous axiological systems (one may also speak of

axiological profiles) that can be either individual or social, and that cover all the decisions that one has the possibility to make. As there is no decision without freedom, values are the expression of our freedom. The notion of value is not restricted to big decisions, nor to a few areas that seem particularly important: any criterion, in any decision, is a value.

To give an example, let us consider the selection of a car, a decision that calls for many criteria, which individually and in connection with each other will probably vary according to the person (or group) making the decision. Criteria can be aesthetics (shape / colour), safety, price (purchase and resale value / consumption of petrol), environment, performance, social image, driver comfort, etc. If we hear (mere supposition) that white cars, more visible, are less implicated in accidents than dark cars, the “trivial” criterion of aesthetics may come into conflict with the more “noble” criterion of safety. Conflicts of this kind illustrate why there should be no distinction between “weekday values” and “Sunday values”: all values compete in the same league.

Our values come into the picture on the one hand when we make decisions (of any kind) and on the other hand when we judge our own decisions. Even though passing judgment on one’s decision is as such also a decision, it is useful to distinguish between our acts and our judging of our own acts, because there can be a tension between what we do (or what we have done) and what we think that we should do or should have done. Two individuals committing the same act (making the same decision) have not the same axiological profile in respect of this act (decision) if one of them regrets the act (decision) while the other one feels comfortable with it.

This tension reveals the conflicts of conscience or, more prosaically, the fragile areas of an axiological system. It is not necessary to determine, in this essay, how exactly this tension should be taken into account while determining the axiological profile of an individual or a group. But suffice it now to say that this tension within an axiological system corresponds to a real fact that may have an impact when decisions are made in defence matters.

3.3 Characteristic features of the Western axiological system (René Girard)

I myself would have put a bomb in a restaurant if it brought us further along the road. Afterwards I would draw the balance—so many women, so many children; and so far along the road. But Christians—and yours is a Christian society—Christians may *not draw the balance*.
John Le Carré [\(59\)](#)

Having introduced our notion of “value,” let us proceed to underline some

characteristic features of the Western axiological system. I have emphasised previously, in the observations that Jacques Baud makes on the role of Western public opinion and media, some sentences to which we should now turn our attention:

Communication, information and the sharp eye of the media condition to a large extent the way of conducting wars. . . . The real “asymmetry” is a result of the evolution in society and its standards rather than in fighting methods. . . . The war capabilities exist, but our reluctance to make use of them is the real obstacle. . . . In Western democratic societies, the legitimacy of action cannot be ignored and tends to prevail over the effectiveness of the operations. . . . Wars took place far from the concerns of Western public opinion. . . . The response from military forces or from the forces of law and order was not restricted by public opinion.

These sentences lead us to the very heart of the problem of asymmetry. The fact that the centre of gravity of warfare toppled into the human space has no doubt been made possible by *technological* innovation (which allows the live broadcasting of information) and by a *political* system (which stands for freedom of the press, freedom of opinion and freedom of speech), but it has been caused by an *axiological* system the specificity of which needs discovering. There is in Western values something new that prevents Western countries from winning wars as they did before.

Why does the sharp eye of the media condition the conduct of war? Why are we reluctant to use our weapons? Why does public opinion restrict the response from our armed forces? The fact that civil society is informed on its own does not provide any satisfactory answer. Indeed, looking at one’s own armed forces crushing their enemies and demonstrating their superiority is not necessarily depressing.

There is no need to look far (around us or back in history), if we want to find societies that delight in the sight of violence: in many countries public executions and mutilations still draw the crowds by the thousand and are broadcast on television. This reality was ours not very long ago. Why has societal violence directed against a defenceless or weak individual ceased to be a public celebration in Western societies and become a sight the very idea of which sickens us?

To address this question, I will turn to anthropologist René Girard, whose work, unequalled as to its powers of explanation, cannot be left aside by anyone interested in societal violence. René Girard examines in particular how literature and myths deal with violence. Here is a brief summary of his thought.

According to René Girard, the chief identifying characteristic of human beings is “mimetic desire,” and the chief identifying characteristic of human societies is the “mimetic cycle.” The coexistence of mimetic desires leads to rivalry between individuals and to increasing tensions within society. At the point where, because of these tensions, society is on the verge of exploding, a “victim mechanism” sets off and a unity gradually takes shape against a single victim who is identified as a cause of scandal and lynched. This murder pacifies society as the former rivals make up: they are convinced that they have been delivered from the *cause* of their troubles. And a new cycle begins. The victim mechanism is the regulator of violence in human societies. It is to this mechanism that human societies owe their (relative and temporary-but actually their only) stability and peace.

René Girard says that all myths are rooted in, and aim at lending weight to, the belief that the victim chosen is really guilty and that the victim-according to the myths-therefore *deserves* death. In a striking contrast to all myths, the Bible (essentially the accounts of the Passion, but also passages from the Old Testament) on the one hand *reveals the innocence* of the victim and on the other hand *denounces and explains* the victim mechanism. It cannot be over-emphasised that the Bible does explain-in terms which have proved anthropologically significant-the mechanism of human societal violence. The Bible states-as a revolutionary theory of man-that human societies release their inner tensions by accusing and killing victims that in reality are innocent. Through this new perspective, the Bible (Old and New Testaments) has caused a modification in the relationship between human society and its victims. This is not without consequences.

Since the victim mechanism has been revealed and denounced as untruthful by the Bible, it has lost a great deal of its regulating power: people no more believe so easily in the guilt of their victims. As a consequence, human societies influenced by the Bible are no more able to pacify themselves by the killing of victims and they are no longer protected-as well as they were before-by the victim mechanism.

It is a fact that Western societies care-like no other society-for the individuals that threaten them: marginalised and weak persons, and even criminals. Such behaviour on the part of a human society, unprecedented in history, is an “anthropological first” [\(60\)](#). Western society is the most preoccupied by victims of any society in history. For the first time in history, the level of mutual aid accorded to emerging countries has become a source of prestige for nations [\(61\)](#). Nothing should be more important than a human being. This explains why the “reasons of state” no longer matter: cohesion cannot be reached at the expense of an innocent victim and we cannot kill anyone for the common good. “Collateral damage” is no longer an excuse for killing civilians. A soldier is no longer just a tiny cog in our war machine. These are new values, as the criteria for decision-making have changed. Western

society does not accept the benefits of violence.

René Girard says about this weakness of Western societies: "The gradual loosening of various centers of cultural isolation began in the Middle Ages and has now led into what we call 'globalization,' which in my view is only secondarily an economic phenomenon. The true engine of progress is the slow decomposition of the closed worlds rooted in victim mechanisms. This is the force that destroyed archaic societies and henceforth dismantles the ones replacing them, the nations we call 'modern.'" [\(62\)](#) "The knowledge we have acquired about our violence, thanks to our religious tradition, does not put an end to scapegoating but weakens it enough to reduce its effectiveness more and more. This is the true reason why apocalyptic destruction threatens us." [\(63\)](#)

It is obvious that the increasing refusal of our society to reap the benefits of the sacrifice of human beings is the cause of the success of asymmetric strategies. In this respect, René Girard makes an absolutely striking comment on a passage of St Paul's letter to the Colossians ("[Jesus Christ] has stripped the sovereignties and the ruling forces, and paraded them in public, behind him in his triumphal procession"—Col. 2, 14-15). René Girard writes: "In the triumph of a victorious [Roman] general the humiliating display of those who are conquered is only a consequence of the victory achieved, whereas in the case of the Cross this display is the victory itself ; it is the unveiling of the violent origin of culture. The powers are not put on display because they are defeated, but they are defeated because they are put on display." [\(64\)](#) This last sentence could have been written by Jacques Baud and it offers an exact description of what is happening in any asymmetric conflict: the powers are defeated because they are put on display. It is in Jesus' footsteps that warfare in the Western world has evolved from the mark of Cain to the sign of the Cross. A part of the Lebanese population may believe that it is Hizballah that protected them against the Israeli defence force. But in reality, they were protected by the memory of Jesus in the conscience of the West.

It is indeed by killing victims that Western armed forces lose the wars in which they are involved, because Western public opinion does not accept the benefits of violence. This feature is the expression of a fundamental part of the values of Western society. When strategists choose to ignore it, they lose their war. This is why the greatest challenge of our time is to define how to defend a society that refuses to owe anything to violence.

Attempts at curing Western society from its apparent weakness have already been made. As René Girard admits, not he but Nietzsche was the first to understand the difference between the collective violence of the rituals and myths (that Nietzsche called Dionysos) and the violence of the Passion of Jesus: "While Dionysos approves

and organizes the lynching of the single victim, Jesus and the Gospels disapprove.”(65) Nietzsche also understood that the Christian ban on sacrifice leaves human societies vulnerable and that “to avoid degenerating, societies must get rid of humans who are waste, who hinder and weigh them down”(66). It is not surprising that National Socialism and Communism, both of which openly proclaimed their belief in, and were actually based on, human sacrifice, had Nietzsche among their spiritual fathers. Both these systems were primarily based on a refusal of Christian values. Now as before, the West is free to accept or reject its Christian heritage.

3.4 The denial of Western specificity and its consequences

All rulers in all ages have tried to impose a false view of the world upon their followers, but they could not afford to encourage any illusion that tended to impair military efficiency. So long as defeat meant the loss of independence, or some other result generally held to be undesirable, the precautions against defeat had to be serious. Physical facts could not be ignored. In philosophy, or religion, or ethics, or politics, two and two might make five, but when one was designing a gun or an aeroplane they had to make four.

George Orwell (67)

Western societies are unable to admit the uniqueness of their own values, because the Western world has lost the awareness of the Christian origin of its values(68). Enlightenment seems to be at the root of this problem. Enlightenment, which is commonly seen as the liberation of Western thought from the yoke of religion (or at least from the restrictions on freedom that may have been imposed by ecclesiastical authorities), was driven rather by anticlericalism than by the wish to reject Christian values. Anticlericalism principally endeavoured to make the Church redundant(69), which could best be achieved by minimising the role played by Christian teaching in the emergence of the values of the Enlightenment. It accomplished this minimisation by translating Christian teaching into secular language and by trying to find new foundations for this teaching in the universal principles of human nature or human reason. This move had two main consequences: on the one hand, the values hijacked by the Enlightenment are drifting away from their source and appear in some respect weakened in Western society (which is no good news in terms of human rights), and, on the other hand, the West believes that its values (held to be based not on any religion but on human nature or reason) are universal and that the rest of the world must necessarily adhere to them.

The achievement of so-called rationalism was to make it impossible for anyone

wanting to avoid an accusation of superstition ever to refer to religion, whereas thinkers like Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) or above all Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), both of whom no one will dare to accuse of being key figures of dark-age obscurantism, had without any doubt understood and accepted the Christian specificity of the European intellectual tradition⁽⁷⁰⁾. In reality, Western intellectuals have never freed themselves from Christian values, whether they spent their lives rejecting them (as did Nietzsche and his followers), contested their origin (which was the case of the so-called rationalists and naturalists), or tried to prove—but without admitting their Christian faith and without any reference to Christian religion—that Christian teaching was not incompatible with reason. This last attitude led Immanuel Kant to translate Mt 7, 12 (Golden Rule) into his categorical imperative. The constant role of Christian religion in European thought is best given account of in Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, Michael Burleigh's recent historical research into the relationship of religion and state in Europe,⁽⁷¹⁾ and in the panorama of English thought offered by Maurice Cowling's *Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England*⁽⁷²⁾.

What is the part of Christian legacy in the Habeas Corpus Act (1679) and above all in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1789)? Is it an accident that the societies that adopted these texts were of Christian tradition? If the values carried by these texts are inherent in nature or human reason, why do these texts remain without (written or oral) equivalent in any other culture? Why did these values remain unknown, for instance, to the Aztec or Babylonian civilisations?

Bearing in mind René Girard's theses, we should be able to see that the principal aim of a document like the European Convention on Human Rights (and the other regional human rights instruments) is to prevent innocent persons from being condemned, which is ensured in particular by statutory provisions that should curb the mimetic outburst of anger and violence that lies in the nature of man and leads society to sentence people even if they are not guilty. In René Girard's view, to which I subscribe, the due process of law is a product of biblical tradition: it is about undoing a mimetic cycle, just as this proverbial first stone was prevented—against human law—from being cast at a victim.

We can find, in this anxiety to protect the inviolable core of human personality, the foundations of democracy. It is only from an organisational point of view that democracy is about bringing opposite opinions to an agreement (with a simple or qualified majority). The heart of democracy, however, and the aim of human rights, are to protect the individual before whom a unanimous community remembers that it should kill no one and finds itself regretting not to have provided for any exception. The civilisation of human rights is based on the daring bet that the individual must be protected against the community. Democracy is not axiologically

neutral ; it presupposes an axiological profile that has not been found so far in any society of non-biblical tradition. This is the reason why democracy cannot be exported as easily as Western society would like it.

The idea of protecting the individual in any circumstances is probably related to the vision of man that necessarily develops in a religion whose god tells his creatures: "Whatever you did to one of these least brothers of mine, you did it to me" (Mt 25, 40). Around the forgiveness granted to sinners, and around sentences (central and unanimously considered central) like "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (Jn 13, 34); "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5, 43-44); "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you" (Mt 7, 12), a society has emerged, though not without difficulty, that tries to protect the human against the bloodthirstiness of idols. It is obvious that these principles have never been totally respected and that they have often served the ideology of the moment⁽⁷³⁾. But it would certainly be wrong to consider that the Western world has kept repeating and remembering these principles without being affected by them. And even though these principles have never been really observed, they have never left the Western conscience, which leads us to the axiological tension areas. Christians do not always forgive, but they know that they should forgive. Thus, the Bible did not prevent the crusades from happening (to answer an objection likely to be raised), but it condemns them unequivocally⁽⁷⁴⁾. Hatred has not disappeared, but it no longer passes as a sacred duty. Violence condemns itself under the banner of Christianity. Can this be said of any other religion? The influence of Christian values throughout human history is a subject largely ignored by modern historians of ideas.

Because they all relate to the protection of victims, the values that underpin the civilisation of human rights show the unmistakable mark of Christianity. However, Western thought is far from rediscovering its Christian roots. Official history (as it is taught in most European schools) is still essentially anticlerical (in particular anti-Catholic) and the public doctrine of all Western countries is still living under the influence of the Enlightenment. The Global Ethic Foundation (Stiftung Weltethos)⁽⁷⁵⁾ is one of the private entities that embody this official and authorised public doctrine.

The Global Ethic Foundation is based on "the idea that the religions of the world can make a contribution to the peace of humankind only if they reflect on those elements of an ethic which they already have in common: on a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes"⁽⁷⁶⁾.

The Foundation was created on the initiative of Hans Küng, a Catholic theologian.

His first intentions have taken the form of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (the Declaration)([77](#)). This text is described as a reflection of the “fundamental consensus on binding values” reached by the religions of the world assembled as a Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago in 1993.

The Declaration is obviously based on Christian values and it follows otherwise the current Western streams, such as environmental awareness. In particular, it refers expressly and specifically by name (but without mentioning its source) to the “Golden Rule” (Mt 7, 12 ; Lk 6, 31): “We must treat others as we wish others to treat us.” Surprisingly, Hans Küng, together with Angela Rinn-Maurer, another Christian theologian, undertook in 2005 a Christian interpretation (under a title amounting to “Global Ethic—a Christian reading”) of the Declaration in order to assess whether or not the Declaration is compatible with Christian teaching([78](#)). The result, as one would have guessed, is positive: “Our analysis showed that the Global Ethic may without difficulty find a foundation in Christian teaching.”([79](#)) It would probably be more accurate to admit that the Global Ethic actually is based on Christian values, rather than considering it the other way round and constructing an artificial justification.

This interpretation from a Christian point of view is the first step of a further project in which representatives of other religions are encouraged to take part. Each religion should examine its compatibility with the Global Ethic: “It would be desirable if this project could be carried on with representatives of other religions.”([80](#)) Islam seems to be particularly aimed at: “The work ‘Global Ethic—a Muslim reading’ for instance would be of great help to all Muslims who despise violence and commit themselves to an Islam compatible with human rights.”([81](#)) As for the Muslims who would not be convinced, their situation is simple: they have to be ignored for “fanatics of any sort will never be convinced by reasoning.”([82](#))

The error of this approach is rooted in the entrenched idea that every text (whether religious or not) may be interpreted in any possible way and that all interpretations are equal and only depend on the reader’s perception. This idea is wrong. And even if we admit it as correct, it remains that the interpreting process is more or less straightforward or arduous depending on the meaning to be given to the text: when it comes to deliver the message hoped for by the reader, some texts speak freely, whereas other texts may need to undergo specific treatments such as drastic cuts.

The Global Ethic’s connection with Christian teaching is not of the same nature as its connection with Muslim teaching (to stick to the example chosen by Angela Rinn-Maurer). For coming to an agreement between the Global Ethic and Christian teaching does not require any particular step other than mentioning the principles of non-violence, truth, respect for the individual that represent the core (and not

some atypical understanding) of Christian teaching. Whereas Jesus Christ, the crucified god, is not the central figure of Islam. So bringing the Global Ethic to an agreement with the Quran will not be as straightforward a task as with the Bible.

Hans Küng and Angela Rinn-Maurer ask Muslims to carry out what lawyers call a “conform interpretation” of the Quran. The conform interpretation consists in choosing from several possible interpretations of a text the interpretation that conforms to a provision of higher rank⁽⁸³⁾. It is certainly possible that some verses of the Quran can provide the basis for the ideas of non-violence, respect of the individual and peace in the sense of the Global Ethic. It is not necessary to determine whether or not these principles are central in Islam, because the main difficulty arises from the approach itself, which consists in favouring an interpretation (whether “mainstream” or “progressive”) according to its compatibility with a norm outside the Quran⁽⁸⁴⁾ (and of clearly biblical inspiration). A Muslim who refuses this compliance assessment of the Quran with the Global Ethic is not necessarily a fanatic, but may be just a believer.

The dialogue between the religions (and between the various axiological systems) is absolutely necessary and desirable, and it cannot be conducted on such an asymmetric basis as laid by the Global Ethic so far. For this basis (probably unintentionally) establishes Christian values as the model to look up to, failure to comply with which on the part of other axiological systems renders those systems at risk of being disqualified as “fanatical.” Respecting differences presupposes differences. The Global Ethic is an attempt, based on moral presuppositions, at denying the differences and at depriving those called to dialogue of their identity. Tolerance according to the Global Ethic is mere indifference—which literally means inability to distinguish.

Hans Küng’s book *Islam: Past, Present and Future* does not seem to have been particularly welcomed by Muslim communities and scholars in Europe. Abdal-Hakim Murad, a leading British Islamic scholar, writes in a review⁽⁸⁵⁾ that “the recurrent errors will make this book useless to historians of ideas” and that “professional Islamicists are likely to recoil from the book because of its huge crop of factual errors.” Abdal-Hakim Murad even puts forward an explanation for these many errors: “All this zealous Islamophilia is no doubt driven in part by Küng’s ‘global ethic’ agenda.” This casts some doubts on the Global Ethic’s intellectual honesty.

The other side of the problem is that, by playing down the part of Christian tradition in the Western way of dealing with violence, the Global Ethic Foundation contributes to further misunderstanding as to the origin of Western values. If non-violence should be preferred to violence, let us beware of underestimating the difficulty of the task. Rather than emphasising that, like all societies, Western society has

resorted and still does resort to violence (which is true-although Western society is still less violent than any other society), let us change the angle and consider that Western society, *in spite of* a religious tradition that condemned violence, has experienced great difficulty in opposing the reign of violence. If we consider it this way, we may understand that abandoning the reference to Christian teaching is not likely to make the future any better.

Far from being approved of as a sign of open-mindedness, the denial of Western uniqueness is more and more seen as a cause of tensions in international relationships. The presence of international organisations or non-governmental organisations (all of which aim at imposing Western values) is often perceived as a destructive interference in foreign axiological systems. In some cases, Western organisations even take advantage of natural disasters to force on emerging countries social changes which would not be accepted in normal circumstances. Six months after the earthquake that killed 100,000 in Pakistan in October 2005, a newspaper reported that “since [the earthquake], these regions under the control of warlords and closed to humanitarian organisations and to the UN had to open. ‘They had no choice. We had to help them after the tragedy. Winter was coming,’ said Ted Itani, Head of Operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. According to many humanitarians, who tell it without cynicism, ‘the earthquake was a chance for women.’” (86) No doubt, but the slogan “they had no choice” will never be a suitable, let alone sustainable, basis for democracy or for the emergence of freedom. According to Samuel Huntington, “the concept of a universal civilization helps justify Western cultural dominance of other societies and the need for those societies to ape Western practices and institutions. Universalism is the ideology of the West for confrontations with non-Western cultures. . . . The non-Wests see as Western what the West sees as universal.” (87)

This question is not only of philosophical interest, it is also of strategic significance. Jacques Baud writes that Western states and institutions underestimate the destructive potential of Western values and principles and that this lack of consideration for the values of other people exacerbates international tensions: “Paradoxically, while the West reads in the attacks of 9/11 the necessity of struggling against poverty and of getting more involved in the Third World, it is probably a message diametrically opposed that terrorism is trying to get across. To put it clearly, it is not about sharing our wealth [*richesses*], but about respecting the “wealth” [*richesses*] of others. The word wealth [*richesses*] must not only be understood in its material sense, but also and above all in its immaterial dimensions like identity and culture. . . . By refusing-voluntarily or not-to listen to these messages, Western societies get themselves in an asymmetric situation. . . . We do not hesitate to shake up age-old traditions to obtain tangible and immediate results. With their will to help in matters they consider essential, Western societies upset

more fundamental balances and generate, often without knowing it, fatal humiliations. We should not stop helping, but try to help in harmony with local cultures.”(88) The *umma*, the community of all Muslims, feels under attack. This is why Islamic terrorists see their fight as defensive, and enjoy support from Muslim populations. This feeling of being attacked is justified, because the umma is under constant axiological attack. Not so much under attack by the Christian as by the predominantly godless and pagan West. There will be no successful counter-terrorism without understanding that the concerns of the Muslims are serious and genuine.

The West has been ignoring and denying for three centuries the specificity and the Christian origin of its values. This doctrine which bans any reference to religion from the public space may still thrive on all stages on which speech and action do not need to be based on reality. But there is one stage on which it is now showing its limits: modern warfare reveals that Western values (in particular the rejection of violence) keep Western armed forces from fighting successfully whereas René Girard’s anthropology reveals the link between this rejection of violence (which is the characteristic feature of the civilisation of human rights) and the biblical tradition of Western civilisation.

It is a fact that our ignorance and denial are cause of both war and defeat. In a recent interview of General Sir Richard Dannatt (“*A Very Honest General*”) published by the Daily Mail(89), the Chief of the General Staff of the British Army openly expressed his concern that Islamist violence might be related to the spiritual vacuum and the decline in Christian values in the United Kingdom. He said that Britain had always been embedded in Christian values and that drifting away from these values could not be seen as a positive evolution. That a general (and not, say, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, who on or about the same date was holding a speech for the Global Ethic Foundation) should make such statements is symptomatic of the situation of the West. As asserted by General Dannatt in the same interview, it is about truth and the Daily Mail did not fail to emphasise the contrast between the soldier’s concern about, and the politicians’ fear of, truth. That the military are more concerned with the truth than the politicians is not an accident. George Orwell recognised very accurately that military efficiency is the stumbling block over which any untruthful ideology finally collapses because “in philosophy, or religion, or ethics, or politics, two and two [may] make five, but when one [is] designing a gun or an aeroplane they [have] to make four”(90).

4 Reducing asymmetry

4.1 Introduction

It is in the field of values, rather than on the battlefield, that asymmetry reveals itself, and therefore asymmetric warfare, as we know it nowadays, is by far not only a military problem. Security issues should be addressed in advance of the emergence of a crisis, which is possible by paying attention to the axiological friction and impacts that are likely to happen every time Western society gets in contact with other cultures. It is not about impeding exchanges, but about understanding what exchanges involve for all parties and to what extent they might have an axiological influence.

Such axiological awareness must become a part of a strategic system aimed at preventing conflicts. Any Western influence, in particular Western aid programmes, are likely to disrupt local axiological balances because they entail an artificial and extraneous dimension. No help from anyone in any circumstances is unanimously welcome, and so any help will be seen, for whatever reason, as an attack by at least a part of the population to be helped. Every aid programme should determine thoroughly what resistance, whether expressed or latent, it is likely to be confronted by. In fact, most aid programmes do not show any consideration for the axiological systems in which they intervene and have a moralising, patronising, and tyrannical conception of aid. Putting an end to such tyranny and arrogance would prove an excellent counter-terrorism measure and protect Western interests much more efficiently than any military means.

Military means, however, are the area to which I will limit my study as to how asymmetry should be reduced. According to the current axiological situation, the perception of violence in Western public opinion represents a constraint that strategists cannot ignore nor eliminate. In a world in which killing a civilian is strategically more harmful to Western position than losing a soldier, the face of war is very likely, if not compelled, to change. Not respecting international law (as the reflection of Western values) during an asymmetric conflict on the pretext that the adversary does not respect it either, must necessarily lead Western armed forces to defeat, for mere axiological reasons and irrespective of any moral consideration.

Indeed, Western public opinion (as a social group) would not accept to give its approval and support to an attitude corresponding to a betrayal of its values. Such betrayal, if finally accepted, would be located in these fragile areas of the axiological system where acts and conscience collide with each other. At the individual level, this situation is likely to provoke psychological troubles with the soldiers taking part in the exactions concerned.

For the time being, I estimate that only a nuclear attack on a Western city could,

momentarily, cause a major change in the Western axiological system and justify in Western public opinion a corresponding indiscriminate response. The future could, as well, bring a modification to the perception of violence in Western society; violence indeed is said to find better acceptance among young people than was the case in previous generations. This may be linked with the increasing secularisation, or rather paganisation, of Western society and schools in particular.

My axiological analysis of the current Western world outlines two axes along which asymmetry could be reduced. On the one hand, war nowadays is a means by which Western countries have more to lose than to win. In such conditions, it seems essential to raise the threshold of war (4.2). On the other hand, at a time at which conflicts are won or lost in the TV lounge of the average citizen, Western countries should endeavour intelligently to promote the empathy of their public opinion with their armed forces (4.3).

Each of the measures envisaged should be understood as a way to improve the position of Western armed forces on the axiological front. None of these measures is meant to lead to a guaranteed success. The notion of guarantee, however, does not exist in strategy. It is only about changing some parameters in order to increase the probability of success, to enhance the propensity of a situation to turn out propitiously.

4.2 Raising the threshold of war

4.2.1 On the notion of “war”

The term “war” is used more for its emotional charge and its rousing function than for the reality that it refers to. What is war on terror, or economic warfare(91)? No one would deny nowadays that the interests of a state are not only played out on the battlefield. And even though security issues are not only the military’s or the police’s business, it seems the notion of “war” entails some axiological specificities which deserve the use of an exclusive term.

What distinguishes war from any other form of relationship is that in a war a human society accepts (making a choice that reveals its values) the risk to the lives of its soldiers without considering that killing its soldiers should necessarily be a crime. In a war, the life of a soldier, as such, is not protected by law. It is a different matter, for instance, for a police operation, because killing a police officer is a crime.

It seems obvious in that light that war must remain something important, because protecting human life is definitely one of the real concerns of Western society, one of its highest values. This means that the decision as to whether or not a war should be started or joined in is an important one, which must involve the highest interests

of a nation. Considering that the United States hurriedly left Somalia after eighteen of its rangers were killed in Mogadishu in 1993, one may ask whether the decision that led to this American intervention really met the conditions axiologically necessary for deserving the term of war. Many conflicts that are casually called wars do not qualify as wars from an axiological point of view. As a rule of thumb, Western countries should refrain from taking part in conflicts in which the inevitable casualties caused by blunders are deemed to be axiologically higher ranked than what is at stake on the battlefield. I would like to return to the demonstrations held in Geneva in June 2003 on the occasion of the G8 Summit in Evian.

The victory won by the police forces against the agitators was based on an axiological choice made by the government⁽⁹²⁾: the priority was to avoid any serious injury and casualty, whatever might happen. In consequence, material damage was to be accepted as soon as preventing it from happening could cause a serious injury (or worse) to anyone. This axiological choice led to frustrating situations for the police forces, who were seen abandoning their positions as soon as a clash with rioting demonstrators was likely to happen. But it was clearly in accordance with the values of Western society current in Geneva. The police forces, for axiological reasons, did not engage in the conflict ; this is why the agitators lost their battle; but this is probably also why so much material damage was caused. The solution for this material damage has not been satisfactory, because although many rioting demonstrators have since been prosecuted, the damages were paid by the French Republic as organiser of the Summit. But the way in which rioting demonstrators were prosecuted is nevertheless interesting and could prove quite effective if conducted on a more consequent and broader basis: shortly after the demonstrations, the police asked the population of Geneva to provide them with any pictures or videotapes made during the demonstrations. Non-violent solutions to violence exist: the application of law is an asymmetric approach to violence that consists in letting the rioters be the stronger in the street and defeating them in criminal and civil courts. The application of law is—and must remain—the civilised way of dealing with violence. Suitable laws exist, at least, at the national level.

This leads us back to armed conflicts. In addition to questioning the appropriateness of armed interventions, I consider that the kind of situations that the United States and its allies have encountered in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that Israel has experienced in Lebanon, could be avoided if the international community was prepared to adapt the rules of conflict resolution to the current geopolitical situation.

4.2.2 Adapting international law to the geopolitical situation

In 1900, the world consisted of 46 independent states; there were 200 in 1998,

whereas 500 ethnic minorities had had their right of self-determination recognised under the United Nations Charter⁽⁹³⁾. Many a tension nowadays takes an international dimension only because the area where it develops escapes—in fact—the sovereignty of the state of which it is—officially and legally—a part. What happens generally is that the state from whose territory violence is organised either is not in a position to react (failed state), or tolerates or encourages more or less actively the activities carried out on its territory (rogue state).

The response to this international violence is an interventionist one: the state threatened by illegal activities intervenes in the failed or rogue state, with the United Nations if possible, and without the United Nations if considered necessary. The means engaged are often military, although the task (in its nature, if not in its scale) resembles rather a police operation.

Law should not give priority to fiction over the facts whenever the facts are clearly established. The notion of the state should not be a mere abstraction, nor only a vehicle of emotion. This is probably, as far as international law is concerned, the lesson to be drawn from the recent intervention of the Israeli defence force against Hizballah on Lebanese territory.

Lebanon, a member of the United Nations, tolerates on its territory (or is unable to put an end to) the presence and the activities of Hizballah, the final aim of which is the destruction of Israel, another member of the United Nations. This simple fact should allow, if not automatically lead to, the questioning of the Lebanese government by the United Nations and the setting of a time limit within which the problem, which affects international security, is to be settled.

The situation with failed states and rogue states raises questions about the responsibility and legitimacy of their governments, the responsibility of their populations, and, in the final analysis, about their sovereignty. In a state such as Lebanon (par excellence “lebanised”), there exists an excessive discrepancy between the formal sovereignty recognised and protected by the United Nations and the sovereignty that the organs of the state are actually in a position to exercise. It seems indeed that Hizballah does not limit itself to being one of the parties in the Lebanese political arena but has taken the place of the Lebanese State in a considerable part of the country, apparently to the satisfaction of the population concerned. It is a mistake on the part of the international community to ignore such an important protagonist.

The United Nations should adopt an organic and dynamic view of the world and establish criteria by which to assess the actual sovereignty of the states: to whom does the population pay taxes (or any similar contribution), who is in charge of the

fundamental tasks of the State (security, infrastructure, judicial system, education, public health, etc.)? On the basis of such criteria, interventions should be possible in the early stages of a confrontation.

In the case of South Lebanon, it does not seem impossible with regard to such criteria that Hizballah is actually more sovereign than Lebanon itself, without any constitutional justification (such as could be the case in a federal state). South Lebanon can be isolated as a pocket of sovereignty which escapes the Lebanese national sovereignty and causes serious concern for the regional security. It plays an independent role on the international stage, and therefore deserves and cannot refuse an independent status.

When Israel intervenes against Hizballah on Lebanese territory, there exists in the protection that Lebanon is currently entitled to draw from international law something that resembles an abuse of process. As it seems, Lebanon lost its sovereignty over South Lebanon a long time ago. To say in such circumstances that Israel violates Lebanon's sovereignty by entering South Lebanese territory is not far from being an abstraction. The situation is all the more embarrassing since it is probably because of the weakness of the Lebanese government that Hizballah is in a position to pose a threat to Israel.

This is not about determining liabilities, but about highlighting that the notions of state and sovereignty are detached from reality. The current model of the United Nations is based on old balances rooted in the will of the Western nation-states. Many countries had their boundaries arbitrarily drawn on a map with a ruler and a pencil. These boundaries made "sense" as long as Western states had an interest in these countries and accepted to resort to strength to defend or help defend their boundaries. The reason why so many countries are dissolving now is that the West is no longer competing with Communism for world domination and has therefore lost interest in these countries. The will on the basis of which these boundaries were drawn has ceased to exist.

Populations must therefore be encouraged to wake up to the challenge of sovereignty and the United Nations should develop new instruments to accompany, where deemed necessary by the relevant populations, the transition from the old artificial boundaries to new boundaries based on natural and sound principles. Such transition will not eradicate violence, but it is likely to reduce violence, as it will lead to new natural balances and permit the resolution, in many parts of the world, of old and artificial imbalances. For the time being, the categories of international law, as well as most interventions of the United Nations, have rather often than not the effect of helping maintain imbalances and do not solve, but worsen in the long run, every security problem.

4.2.3 Deterrence and flexibility: questioning professionalisation

What is the point of having all this army if we don't use it?

Madeleine Albright

As far as military planning is concerned, the security of Western states depends on a twofold balance:

- The balance, on the one hand, between use and perception of violence. The perception of violence by Western public opinion is the arbiter of modern conflicts. Using violence without being assured that it will be supported by Western society is a dead-end situation.
- The balance, on the other hand, between keeping an important military strength and being moderate in its use. As pointed out by the classical approaches to asymmetry, it is the imbalance between the respective strength of the belligerents that compels insurgent forces to “asymmetric” strategies and to be content with low-intensity conflicts. If the Western states stop being clearly superior in strength, the old high-intensity, classical conflicts are likely to make their comeback.

The crucial element of this twofold balance (and the key to security) is the rediscovery by Western society of the notion of *usefulness* applied to defence. For it is indeed about maintaining very important military means and, simultaneously, not using them. The way in which West European countries give up their defence in the name of fashionable ideologies (like pacifism or Revolution in Military Affairs) is usually justified with the idea that it would be possible, if necessary, to adapt the military means quantitatively to the current situation. This idea is wrong, and leads inevitably first to war and then to defeat. This is because any country that starts buying weapons and developing its armed forces during a crisis contributes to the escalation of international tension and precipitates the outbreak of a war for which it is not ready.

It is not impossible that some Western states feel compelled, because of the mentality of their public opinions and political elites, to use their military means in order to prevent them from being considered useless and having their budget cut. This may explain why some military interventions do not meet the axiological criteria of war as defined previously. “*What is the point of having all this army if we don't use it?*”[\(94\)](#) The same situation is likely to happen at the level of the United Nations: if one considers the number of troops that some states maintain almost permanently in their UN contingents, it seems very likely that these missions are vital to maintaining their armed forces. Such situations are likely to give rise to conflicts of interests that the United Nations has probably no possibility to control.

In particular, they may probably extend the military presence of the United Nations (which is considered Western in many parts of the world) without this presence being axiologically appropriate.

Contrary to the general trend towards professionalisation, I consider that the system best adapted to the current strategic situation is the militia. The main advantage of this system is that it offers an optimal correlation between the strength available (militia forces are numerous), the strength necessary (high flexibility according to the situation) and the strength tolerated by public opinion. The militia system is based on a wise conception of usefulness in security matters because it accepts by nature that armed forces are not only useful when they are fighting. At the axiological level, the militia system allows the balance between use and perception of violence to be maintained, because mobilising all or part of the forces requires the situation to be considered serious within the population to which the militia belongs. In this respect, if war remains something serious, there is no reason why a state and a society should refuse to appoint the best of their citizens to its conduct. The best citizens, as already pointed out by Machiavelli⁽⁹⁵⁾ and as is probably still true today, are not necessarily those who decide on a military career. This brings us to the question of empathy.

4.3 Promoting empathy

The Western citizen sitting in his TV lounge has become one of the key figures of any modern strategic situation. One of the most effective means of reducing asymmetry is to bring the axiological profile of the armed forces into line with the axiological profile of the Western citizen.

4.3.1 Axiological drawbacks of professionalisation

It can be asserted with no major risk that the axiological profile of Western professional soldiers is different from the axiological profile represented by Western public opinion. On the one hand, indeed, deciding on a military career certainly goes against the tide of the modern way of life and of the values of Western societies. On the other hand, the life of professional soldiers is detached from many of the concerns of the average citizen: their world is a very particular, closed one, and not very representative of Western society.

In consequence, professional soldiers cannot be in a good position to perceive, when they are carrying out a mission, what will be considered acceptable or unacceptable by Western society. Yet, the ability to comply with the expectations of public opinion is crucial because the image of Western troops is affected not only when massacres (or other unlawful acts) are perpetrated, but also when soldiers adopt a behaviour that, without being unlawful or immoral, is simply inappropriate

by the standards of Western public opinion. Anyone is able to learn international law in a theory room, but only a group of civilians can foresee the reaction of public opinion.

When American soldiers listen to heavy metal while shooting at Iraqi soldiers or comment on their experience of war as they would about their last video game, they run counter to Western public opinion. This is not about determining whether, legally or morally, the attitude of these soldiers is reprehensible or not. It is a mere question of compliance with an axiological profile. Something rather indefinite will make public opinion feel ill at ease. People will see in this attitude some sort of disrespect for the Iraqi soldiers (who are in addition badly equipped) and even for war. And when, after public opinion has already been made an uncomfortable witness in this way, there arrives the scandal of Abu Ghraib, all axiologically negative impressions combine into a single picture: Abu Ghraib becomes the necessary and natural complement of heavy metal, and vice versa. Similarly, nobody in the media knew (and even cared) whether the German soldiers who posed with a skull in Afghanistan had committed a crime in doing so, but disapproval was vehement and unanimous.

The problem of compliance with public opinion seems to be getting worse as military careers are losing their attraction. Professional forces experience increasing difficulty in attracting people representative of public opinion. In this respect again, a militia seems to be more appropriate,[\(96\)](#) as its members are by nature (if the system is based on conscription) representative of public opinion. It is surprising, however, that many recruiting campaigns aim consciously at the lower classes of society or overemphasise the “adventure” side of military life. Adventure is certainly the last thing that members of armed forces should be looking for, and adventurers are the last kind of people armed forces need nowadays. The world has changed; the modern battlefield is off limits to Rambos and cowboys.

4.3.2 Discipline on the axiological front

Military discipline is a necessity of combat. The discovery of the axiological terrain will necessarily lead strategists to develop a discipline focused on the image of the armed forces in public opinion. Manoeuvring in the human space needs axiological discipline, just as the success of many an ambush is based on fire discipline.

It seems essential that armed forces should develop a new sensibility centred on their image and that this image should be protected by the laws of the Western states. The image of the armed forces is as important as the condition of their equipment (which is protected by legal provisions): armed forces whose image is sullied are no more fit for combat. The United States has lost its current wars-and

probably the next two or three—in places like Abu Ghraib, Haditha, and Guantanamo.

The best way to improve one's image is to improve one's behaviour. Huge efforts are necessary already at internal level: there is a general military tendency to avoid disciplinary procedures and to "solve problems" in a more informal way. The idea that resorting to disciplinary procedures is a sign of weakness or failure on the part of a commander is widespread and leads to punitive measures that are based not on legality but on humiliation. The pictures of Abu Ghraib may have cost the United States a war, even though, in the final analysis, they remain very far from the worst that can be done to an enemy. Many humiliating measures (such as would be considered harassment or mobbing under employment law) ordered as unofficial punishment (in place of a due disciplinary procedure) or self-organised within the troop itself and more or less tolerated or simply ignored by the hierarchy, are relatively close to the pictures of Abu Ghraib. Why should an enemy be better treated than the punching-bag of the platoon? Disciplinary procedures must be played down and considered the normal way of dealing with disciplinary problems.

The question as to how soldiers should behave within their troop and in their interactions with the outer world must become a part of their training, and it must be regulated (with the sanction of disciplinary and criminal law) according to the current axiological situation. This axiological training is due to vary, in particular, according to the places where the armed forces intervene.

Regardless of their moral conceptions and legal knowledge, soldiers must be trained to think about the axiological dimension and impact of any act they intend to carry out. This axiological awareness must become a reflex as prompt as any reflex necessary for a fighter to survive. Acquiring such a reflex does not require a high moral standard or a particularly accurate legal knowledge. The uproars caused by blunders are not about a Kantian vs utilitarian approach to ethics, but about lapses from the normal behaviour expected from an average, decent citizen (which a soldier should try to remain). The only judge at strategic level is public opinion, and this is the reason why it is not necessary (and maybe even not desirable) that the average soldier should be more of a philosopher than the average citizen.

The soldiers' behaviour plays a major part as well in the potential welcome that the occupying troops may meet among the population. For obvious reasons, the population is in general ill-disposed towards the occupying forces, but it would be wrong to believe that a population can be perfectly unanimous in this feeling. If the occupying forces are well behaved (according to the local axiological system), they are likely to arouse some kind of respect and their good behaviour will be noticed and reported. Those in the population that are not particularly happy about their

own society may consider collaborating with the occupying forces. But if the occupying forces behave in a dishonourable way (by local standards), even those who do not feel particularly sorry for their own country being occupied will be ashamed of being friendly towards them and will refrain from expressing any positive comment. The behaviour of the troops is probably the first step in this famous fight for hearts and minds, which is based on nothing tangible⁽⁹⁷⁾.

4.3.3 Communication: occupying the human space

Armed forces and police forces must be aware that they manoeuvre in the human space. The human space (in particular the axiological terrain) can and should be exploited like any other terrain. No terrain can be exploited but by accepting its constraints and its reality. As far as communication is concerned, the requirement of truth is a constraint in Western society and therefore any information given must be true to be effective⁽⁹⁸⁾.

I will distinguish between two aspects of communication: a “negative” aspect, consisting in counteracting or thwarting the communication of the adversary by depriving the adversary of the information it needs (4.3.3.1) and a “positive” aspect, consisting in taking the initiative so as to break the asymmetric adversary’s monopoly on the human space (4.3.3.2).

4.3.3.1 Counter-communication: anticipating impacts

Armed forces and police forces should pay better attention to the communication and propaganda of their adversaries. They would be in a position to understand what kind of axiological pictures their adversary is profiting from, which would enable them to avoid delivering such pictures. A great deal of unfavourable information is produced by the armed forces and police forces themselves.

This matter and the question of behaviour as addressed previously (from the angle of discipline) overlap partially. We will look now into the question of behaviour from the angle of the communication strategy of the *adversary*, or of *third parties* that are more or less involved in the conflict, more or less hostile, and that are likely to play a role in the human space (such as the pacifist wing of Western public opinion, NGOs, etc.). It is essential that the armed forces should listen to, and take into account, the messages expressed by those who have an interest in giving a bad image of the armed forces.

Before the Iraq War started, local propaganda in Iraq and propaganda from the rest of the Arab world made every effort to depict the American soldier as a godless barbarian, the product of a decadent civilisation, in short, the exact opposite of the local axiological profile. At the same time, an important part of Western public

opinion (in Europe but also in the United States) expressed the view that the war to come was simply an expedition of warmongers. It is likely that the behaviour of the American armed forces—in addition to making useless the success obtained on the battlefield—has confirmed the information that had been given about them by their military and political adversaries. The scandal of Abu Ghraib alone shows that the reputational risk has not been taken seriously and that the United States has underestimated the readiness of Western public opinion to listen to what victims have to say.

This applies also to police forces. I have previously pointed out, in my analysis of anti-globalisation demonstrations, how the agitators endeavour to lend weight to the idea of an antagonism between the police forces and the peaceful demonstrators. Police forces should therefore refrain from any behaviour likely to give credence to the idea of such antagonism. Now, when peaceful demonstrators are standing in front of several ranks of police officers all equipped with their “Robocop” riot outfits (probably designed to impress the adversary—which is already a problem), they will easily notice that the police forces look indeed hostile to them. The police forces appear exactly as their adversaries wanted them to appear: inhuman and ready for violence. No photographer can help taking a picture of this so visible opposition between the frailty of the peaceful demonstrator and the implacable harshness of the forces of law and order. Such images are extremely harmful because they heighten the asymmetry: before any clash takes place, the police forces are in the role of the aggressor and do their best to remind everyone of George Orwell’s “boot stamping on a human face.”

4.3.3.2 Breaking the adversary’s monopoly on emotions

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt
Publius Vergilius Maro [\(99\)](#)

“Robocop” outfits are obviously necessary in some situations. But in these situations, police forces would be well-advised to communicate the reasons which have led them to adopt these particular means of protection. The interpretation of such a decision should not be left to chance, let alone to the adversary. And the fact that the reasons may seem obvious should never make the police forces save the cost of an explicit statement. If the police forces do not say that it is the presence of rioting demonstrators that causes them to wear their riot outfits, nobody (and certainly not the agitators) will do this for them. Because of their passivity, the police forces—who are on duty precisely to protect democracy and the right to demonstrate—take on the role of the liberticidal force that the agitators try to impose on them.

Occupying the human space should be a reflex whenever armed forces or police forces intervene. Their situation is far from being hopeless; they have all resources needed to play a very decent role in the human space. In particular, soldiers are animated by a sense of duty that is not unanimously yet often admired in our individualistic societies. But success in the human space probably requires an evolution of the mentalities among armed forces and police forces: in order to align oneself with a public opinion that tends to favour David over Goliath, it is necessary to play on one's weakness. Just as no orchestra can totally cover the human voice (that will still be audible, whatever the sound level of the instruments), a machine will never win any battle in the human space.

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Notes

1. Conference on "The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare" organised by the Faculty of Military Sciences and the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands (Amsterdam, 4-6 October 2006). [\(back\)](#)
2. Thomas Edward Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Jonathan Cape, London,

privately printed 1926, First published for general circulation 1935, p. 188. [\(back\)](#)

3. See, e.g., Th. A. Van Baarda / D.E.M. Verweij (editors), *Military Ethics: The Dutch Approach*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden 2006. [\(back\)](#)

4. According to Jacques Baud, *La Guerre asymétrique ou la défaite du vainqueur*, Editions du Rocher, Monaco 2003, p. 85. [\(back\)](#)

5. Karl Raimund Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, London 1959, p. 108 [first published 1934 ; original title: *Logik der Forschung*]. [\(back\)](#)

6. See, for instance, Gary Eason, "From David and Goliath onwards, asymmetric warfare is not a new concept," BBC News Online, Tuesday, 1 April 2003 at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2904103.stm [state on 31 October 2007] [\(back\)](#)

7. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*. [\(back\)](#)

8. Based on Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *Pro Milone* [first published 52 BC]: "*Silent enim leges inter arma.*" [\(back\)](#)

9. Baud, op. cit., pp. 32 and 97. [\(back\)](#)

10. Ibid, p. 33. [\(back\)](#)

11. Ibid, pp. 33-34. [\(back\)](#)

12. Ibid, pp. 98-99. [\(back\)](#)

13. Ibid, p. 95. [\(back\)](#)

14. Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, Penguin Books, London 2006, pp. 245-248 [first published 2005]. [\(back\)](#)

15. Baud, op. cit., p. 101. See also Lawrence, op. cit., p. 189: "I began to drum out the aim in war. The books gave it pat-the destruction of the armed forces of the enemy by the one process-battle. Victory could be purchased only by blood. This was a hard saying for us. As the Arabs had no organised forces, a Turkish Foch would have no aim? The Arabs would not endure casualties. How would our Clausewitz buy his victory?" [\(back\)](#)

16. In an interview given to CNN in February 2006 (and broadcast on 23 August 2006), Malika el Aroud, the widow of one of the suicide bombers who killed Ahmed

Shah Massoud on 9 September 2001, describes how the families in Osama bin Laden's clan, far from offering their condolences, congratulated her for her husband's actions. [\(back\)](#)

17. Baud, op. cit., pp. 102-103. [\(back\)](#)

18. Gandhi, *Non-violence in Peace and War*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 1948, vol. 1, p. 111. [\(back\)](#)

19. From Hagakure (17th century), quoted in: Rinaldo Massi, *Bushido: La voie des samouraïs*, 3rd edition, translated from Italian into French by Philippe Baillet, Edition Pardès, Puiseaux 1987, p. 17. [\(back\)](#)

20. Baud, op. cit., p. 96. [\(back\)](#)

21. See Eason, op. cit. [\(back\)](#)

22. In the national public opinions of belligerent countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the situation is seen from a different angle, as the population tends (but there are many exceptions) to identify with the national troops rather than the foreign civilians, which is perfectly understandable. These public opinions oppose war because their soldiers are killed. It is this opposition (not the fighting) that leads to the end of the war and to defeat. Again, this shows that the human value of a soldier is more important than his or her tactical value. [\(back\)](#)

23. See Morjane Baba, *Guérilla kit. Nouvelles ruses et techniques de la lutte anticapitaliste*, Editions La Découverte, Paris 2003. However, the notion of "civil disobedience" as developed in the French speaking world by José Bové, includes requirements with which most agitators do not bother to comply (José Bové / Gilles Luneau, *Pour la désobéissance civique*, Editions La Découverte, Paris 2004, pp. 161-162). [\(back\)](#)

24. The influence of Marxist materialistic ideology, according to which a doctrine must materialise in praxis (failing which it is considered mere petit bourgeois hypocrisy), is obvious. [\(back\)](#)

25. Micheline Spoerri, *Genève, juin 2003... Un G8 pas comme les autres*, Editions Slatkine, Geneva 2006, p. 58. [\(back\)](#)

26. Extract from a document published on the website of Attac Switzerland shortly before the G8 Summit of Evian
<http://www.suisse.attac.org/Contre-l-expropriation-des-peuples> [state on 31 October 2007] [\(back\)](#)

27. For pictures of Carlo Giuliani trying to throw a fire extinguisher at police officers, see: <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/genova/pics3a.htm> [state on 31 October 2007] ([back](#))

28. Extract from a statement of the Geneva police, as quoted in *Le Courrier* on 30 July 2003. ([back](#))

29. Statement of Attac Neuchâtel dated 16 May 2005
<http://www.suisse.attac.org/Condamnation-des-participant-e-s-a> [state on 31 October 2007] ([back](#))

30. Spoerri, op. cit., pp. 58-59. ([back](#))

31. Micheline Spoerri is a former member of the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva. She was in charge of the Department for Justice, Police and Security in 2003. ([back](#))

32. Spoerri, op. cit., p. 127. ([back](#))

33. Ibid, pp. 131-132. ([back](#))

34. Wikipedia depicts Carlo Giuliani as a symbol for the victims of police abuse (http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Giuliani) and reveals that several squares have been renamed after the name of Carlo Giuliani, such as the "Carlo-Giuliani Platz" in Bern [state on 31 October 2007]. ([back](#))

35. Spoerri, op. cit., p. 128. ([back](#))

36. Article published in *Le Temps* on 9 August 2006: "Les images du Liban: une guerre dans la guerre." ([back](#))

37. Israel's position seems to be torn between the public opinion of Western Europe and its own public opinion. See Tim McGirk, "The End of Invincibility," in *Time*, 4 September 2006, pp. 20-21. ([back](#))

38. AFP Agency despatch dated 27 August 2006. ([back](#))

39. Anatoli Karpov / Jean-François Phelizon, *Psychologie de la bataille*, Editions Economica, Paris 2004, p. 94. ([back](#))

40. *Time*, September 4, 2006, pp. 20-21. ([back](#))

41. Baud, op. cit., p. 95. ([back](#))

42. Ibid, op. cit., p. 159. [\(back\)](#)

43. Ibid, op. cit., p. 94. [\(back\)](#)

44. Gabriel Marcel, *Les Hommes contre l'humain*, Editions Universitaires, Paris 1992, p. 96 [First published 1956]. [\(back\)](#)

45. Popper writes on Alfred Tarski's truth theory: "Tarski's theory, as you all know, and as he stressed first, is a rehabilitation and an elaboration of the classical theory that truth is correspondence to the facts." (Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1972, p. 323). [\(back\)](#)

46. This is the title of one of the chapters of Popper's *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1972. [\(back\)](#)

47. Read, on this subject: Hilary Putnam, *Fait/Valeur: la fin d'un dogme et autres essais*, Editions de l'éclat, Paris-Tel-Aviv 2004, pp. 11 sq. [First published 2002; original title: *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy, and other essays*]. [\(back\)](#)

48. In the meaning science is given by Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, London 1959 [first published 1934; original title: *Logik der Forschung*]. [\(back\)](#)

49. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest*, 16 (Summer 1989), Washington 1989, pp. 3-18. [\(back\)](#)

50. Peter Gross, *Die Multioptionsgesellschaft*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1994, p. 14. [\(back\)](#)

51. Such is the central thesis of Karl Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism*, first published 1957. [\(back\)](#)

52. One of the analyses of the CIA was that Osama bin Laden could have given very substantial amounts of money to the families of the kamikaze, as stated for instance by Hersh Seymour, *Dommages collatéraux*, Editions Gallimard, Paris 2006, p. 154 [First published 2004 ; original title: *Chain of Command*]. As it seems, the families of suicide bombers can find in the sacrifice of their relative a source of pride and honour. In an interview given to CNN in February 2006 (and broadcast on 23 August 2006), Malika el Aroud, the widow of one of the suicide bombers who killed Ahmed Shah Massoud on 9 September 2001, explained that being the widow of a martyr was the "pinnacle in Islam" (an attitude which she personally seemed to disapprove of). Immediately after her husband's death, during her stay in Osama bin Laden's clan in Afghanistan, Malika el Aroud, who was born in Morocco but grew

up in Belgium and is a Belgian citizen, received a letter from bin Laden which contained the very reasonable amount of US\$500. [\(back\)](#)

53. In particular, a survey in the UK revealed in Autumn 2006 that forty per cent of Muslims between 16 and 24 would prefer to live under sharia law in Britain. [\(back\)](#)

54. Hani Ramadan, who had been teaching French for fifteen years in a state school in Geneva, published in *Le Monde* on 10 September 2002 a letter to the editor with the title “La Charia incomprise” (“Sharia misunderstood” or “Sharia not understood”). This document justifies, on a religious basis, the legitimacy of a religious law. As such, this position is perfectly unchallengeable and indisputable. However, this letter caused a scandal. Hani Ramadan was suspended as a teacher by the cantonal government of Geneva, a sanction that was revoked by the Administrative Court of the Canton of Geneva, the appeal authority. [\(back\)](#)

55. This surprise, widely considered an upheaval in the media, led the United States and the European Union to reduce their financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. [\(back\)](#)

56. See Hume, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Morals* [first published 1751]; Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral* [first published 1887]. [\(back\)](#)

57. On the notion of science, see Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. [\(back\)](#)

58. In French: “Une valeur est un critère de décision.” and in German: “Ein Wert ist ein Entscheidungskriterium.” [\(back\)](#)

59. John Le Carré, *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold*, Pan Books Ltd, London 1964 [first published 1963], p. 134. The statement is from East German intelligence officer Fiedler, one of the main characters of the novel. Fiedler wants to understand the philosophy of his Western counterpart, British intelligence officer Leamas. Whereas Fiedler clearly sees himself as a Communist, Leamas considers himself to be “nothing” as far as philosophical streams are concerned. It is Fiedler who knows that Leamas is a Christian, and that Christian teaching (unlike communist ideology) does not provide any support for the killing of innocent people. Leamas would like to dismiss this idea and to deny any Christian influence on the West. But all he finds to say is: “For Christ’s sake.” [\(back\)](#)

60. René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Gracewing, Leominster 2001, p. 166 [first published 1999; original title: *Je vois Satan tomber comme l’éclair*]. [\(back\)](#)

61. Girard, op. cit., p. 161. [\(back\)](#)

62. Ibid, pp. 165-166. [\(back\)](#)

63. Ibid, p. 184. [\(back\)](#)

64. Ibid, p. 143. [\(back\)](#)

65. Ibid, pp. 171-172. [\(back\)](#)

66. Ibid, p. 174 [\(back\)](#)

67. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth 1954 [first published 1949], p. 159. [\(back\)](#)

68. Such is namely the opinion of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster: "Europe today is a place which wants the fruits of faith, and subconsciously adheres to the values of our Christian tradition, yet too often ignores the roots ; it wants the values and the priorities of faith without the covenant relationship with God which is its true source. In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict tackles this unconscious forgetting, reminding us that love is engineered, as it were, to seek the divine, and must always be replenished from its source. He quotes Pope Gregory the Great in his Pastoral Rule that the good pastor must be rooted in contemplation, for only in this way can he take upon himself the needs of others and make them his own. How long can a river last without rainfall?" Sermon preached at Downside Abbey Church on St Gregory's Day (13 March 2006) by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor ; at:

http://www.downside.co.uk/abbey/homilies_archive.html [state on 31 October 2007] [\(back\)](#)

69. Read, on this subject, the chapter on the Great Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* [first published 1880; in Russian]. [\(back\)](#)

70. See Erasmus, *Querela Pacis undique Gentium ejectae prostigataeque* [first published 1517]: "How can it be that Christ's doctrine, infinitely superior to the teachings of nature, could not persuade those who confess it, of this unique truth that it preaches ahead of all others, I mean peace and mutual benevolence?" [\(back\)](#)

71. Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: Religion and Politics in Europe, from the French Revolution to the Great War*, HarperCollins, London 2005. [\(back\)](#)

72. Maurice Cowling, *Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England*; Volume I (1980); Volume II: Assaults (1985); Volume III: Accommodations (2001); Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [\(back\)](#)

73. See, for a critical analysis of a Christian defence of Marxism: Jacques Ellul, *L'idéologie marxiste chrétienne*, Editions du Centurion, Paris 1979. [\(back\)](#)

74. The question of interpretation will be tackled later on. [\(back\)](#)

75. <http://www.weltethos.org> [\(back\)](#)

76. Global Ethic Foundation, History of the Foundation, at: http://www.weltethos.org/dat_eng/st_1_e.htm [state on 31 October 2007] [\(back\)](#)

77. http://www.weltethos.org/pdf_decl/Decl_english.pdf [state on 31 October 2007] [\(back\)](#)

78. Hans Küng / Angela Rinn-Maurer, *Weltethos christlich verstanden*, Herder Verlag, Freiburg-im-Breisgau 2005. [\(back\)](#)

79. "Dabei zeigte sich, dass das Weltethos sehr wohl christlich begründet werden kann." Rinn-Maurer Angela, "Zeit zum Aufwachen. Warum wir ein Weltethos in christlicher Sprache brauchen," in: Zeitzeichen, Evangelische Kommentare zu Religion und Gesellschaft, June 2006, at: <http://www.weltethos.org/00-home/zeit-zum-aufwachen.htm> [state on 31 October 2007]. [\(back\)](#)

80. "Es wäre wünschenswert, wenn sich dieses neue Projekt mit Vertretern anderer Religionen fortführen ließe." Rinn-Maurer, loc. cit. [\(back\)](#)

81. "Jedoch wäre zum Beispiel das Werk "Weltethos-muslimisch verstanden" eine große Hilfe für alle Muslime, die Gewalt verachten und sich dafür einsetzen, dass der Islam und die Menschenrechte miteinander vereinbar sind." Rinn-Maurer, loc. cit. [\(back\)](#)

82. "Fanatiker jeder Couleur werden sich nie von Argumenten überzeugen lassen." Rinn-Maurer, loc. cit. [\(back\)](#)

83. A national law is interpreted in accordance with the national constitution, or in accordance with a provision of Community law. [\(back\)](#)

84. The Quran has in Islam a far greater significance than the Bible within Christianity. The Quran has, as a book, a sacred character of such a nature as cannot be compared with the respect that Christians show to their Bible. [\(back\)](#)

85. *The Catholic Herald*, 18 May 2007, p. 15. [\(back\)](#)

86. From an article published six months after the Earthquake in North Pakistan (8

October 2005, 100,000 victims) by *La Liberté*, 25 April 2006. [\(back\)](#)

87. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1996, p. 66. [\(back\)](#)

88. Baud, op. cit., pp. 154-158. [\(back\)](#)

89. Sarah Sands, "A Very Honest General," in *Daily Mail*, 13 October 2006. [\(back\)](#)

90. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth 1954 [first published 1949], p. 159. [\(back\)](#)

91. See Jean Pichot-Duclos, *Les Guerres secrètes de la mondialisation: guerre économique, guerre de l'information, guerre terroriste*, Editions Lavauzelle, Panazol 2002; Christian Harbulot / Didier Lucas (editors), *La guerre cognitive: L'arme de la connaissance*, Editions Lavauzelle, Panazol 2002; Liang Qiao / Wang Xiangsui, *La Guerre hors limites*, Editions Payot et Rivages, Paris 2003 [First published 1999 ; in Chinese]. [\(back\)](#)

92. Spoerri, op. cit. [\(back\)](#)

93. Jean Pichot-Duclos, *Les Guerres secrètes de la mondialisation*, Editions Lavauzelle, Panazol 2002, pp. 19 sq. [\(back\)](#)

94. These words from former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright are quoted by Rupert Smith, op. cit., p. 311. [\(back\)](#)

95. See on this subject: Machiavelli, *Dell'Arte della Guerra* [first published 1521]. [\(back\)](#)

96. On the superiority of militia, see: Machiavelli, *Dell'Arte della Guerra* [first published 1521] and Bernard Wicht, *L'idée de milice et le modèle suisse dans la pensée de Machiavel*, Editions L'Age d'Homme, Lausanne 1995. [\(back\)](#)

97. "And how would the Turks defend all that [140,000 square miles]? No doubt by a trenchline across the bottom, if we came like an army with banners ; but suppose we were (as we might be) an influence, an idea, a thing intangible, invulnerable, without front nor back, drifting about like a gas? Armies were like plants, immobile, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head. We might be a vapour, blowing where we listed. Our kingdoms lay in each man's mind; and as we wanted nothing material to live on, so we might offer nothing material to the killing." (Lawrence, op. cit., p. 192) [\(back\)](#)

98. Manipulating information or reporting through interested third parties does

probably not pay off in the long run. NBC, which broadcast impressive pictures of the first Gulf War and laudatory comments on new American weapons, was owned by General Electric, one of the first suppliers of the American armed forces. See Bernard Wicht, *L'OTAN attaque ! La nouvelle donne stratégique*, Georg Editeur, Geneva 1999, p. 42. [\(back\)](#)

99. "Tears flow at the sight of the world and human destiny touches one's heart." Said by Aeneas to his friend Achatas when discovering in their Carthaginian exile a painting of the Trojan war that they have just lost (Maro Publius Vergilius, *Aeneid*, book 1, verse 462 [first published between 29 and 19 BC]). [\(back\)](#)