

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THIRD EUROPEAN COMMUNITY/LATIN AMERICA

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

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Working document
on

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

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Third Committee: Social, Cultural and Legal Affairs

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Working document

1. The Latin American and European Parliaments cannot and must not remain indifferent to the violence which currently exists in almost every country in the world and goes under the name of terrorism. Any analysis of this phenomenon must be preceded by a definition, and we shall therefore look briefly at the history of terrorism.
2. The Italian authority on criminal law, Francisco Carrara, defines three separate periods in the development of this age-old phenomenon: from the earliest civilizations to the founding of Rome; from the Roman Empire until 1876; and as the contemporary period, from 1876 until the emergence of modern law codes.
3. Terrorism existed in primitive societies, and in Far Eastern countries such as China, India and other adjacent countries where forms of democratic government were unknown. This was not the case in Western societies with democratic traditions such as Greece and Rome. Philosophy and jurisprudence encouraged argument based on learning and the principle of peaceful persuasion rather than terror.
4. In the eighteenth century, known as the century of enlightened despotism, despotic governments ruled by unbridled terrorism. At the end of this century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the clash of democratic, liberal, anti-clerical, masonic and republican ideas with the absolutism of the despots marked the development of terrorism as a means of opposing liberal trends. This occurred in Spain, Italy and Russia, and in America, during both the colonial epoch and the independence movement. Today terrorism exists, in constantly varying forms, in many countries of the world with, it would appear, increasingly serious consequences.
5. Literally terrorism is defined as domination by terror (the fear of a threat) or a succession of acts of violence designed to instil terror. In

a political context terrorism signifies the employment of terror for the achievement of specific objectives. It is therefore not an end but a means, which has been used since time immemorial and takes various forms - physical, psychological, religious and political. In all cases it relies on coercion and violence, to the exclusion of dialogue - in short, domination by terror.

6. Proof of the existence of terrorism is the repetition of crimes creating a state of alarm or fear within a community or certain political or social groups. It is a phenomenon with many facets expressed in different types of crimes, the most common being invasion of private property, assault, kidnapping, illegal detention, damaging public and private property and sabotage, and more violent means such as fire, bombings or torture, spreading fear and panic and threatening law and order at every level. Terrorists choose their victims from among the political, economic or social establishment, crowds or even ordinary people who unwittingly meet with their displeasure. They commit their crimes in crowded places, or places which represent or symbolize some aspect of what they wish to destroy. Their immediate aim is to spread fear among the public.

7. Terrorism is thus essentially a means of exerting pressure by wreaking havoc and destruction among its victims. Summing up all its different forms, the Spanish expert on criminal law, Eugenio Cuello Calón, has said that terrorism signifies 'the creation, through the repeated committing of crimes, of a state of alarm or terror within the community or certain social or political groups'.

8. Given this definition of terrorism, why has it become an international issue? We believe that the answer lies in the cultural disparities which exist in today's society, the economic and political imbalances which lead to situations in which human dignity is totally disregarded - in short, the attempts at domination of the weak countries by the strong ones.

9. Faced with this social, political and economic situation, nonconformist, desperate individuals and groups emerge with their particular characteristics, and a fanaticism which leads them to adopt desperate attitudes driving them to commit criminal acts and, finally, terrorism, which they consider the only way of changing the existing system.

10. In cases where terrorism has international repercussions, this is frequently due to imperialist attitudes and the subjection of peoples which inevitably create social, economic and political disparities. Although the purpose of terrorist acts on an international scale is sometimes to attract the world's attention, such acts often backfire on their instigators by provoking feelings of disgust and protest.

11. We consider that terrorist acts cannot be justified under any circumstances, as the removal of one political or economic factor does not solve the under-

lying problem, and attacks on random, individual or collective objectives, or movable and immovable property, leave a trail of innocent victims and frequently damage a country's historic, cultural, artistic and economic heritage.

12. The Third European Community/Latin America Inter-parliamentary Conference is therefore asked to consider the following proposed objectives as a basis for its recommendations:

(a) the elimination, wherever possible and by every available means, of all violations of human rights in each and every one of the countries whose Parliaments are represented in the Latin American and European Parliaments, by creating the conditions under which citizens may enjoy all their rights;

(b) the promotion, in a manner reflecting the social and political conditions in the countries whose Parliaments are represented in the European and Latin American Parliaments, of a harmonization of social security systems with a view to raising overall living standards in those countries;

(c) ensuring that the combating of unbridled terrorism does not lead to political repression lacking any justification in law, and that, under the most suitable conditions for each country, the respective Parliaments adopt the legal provisions which they consider appropriate;

(d) the promoting of respect for distributive justice in economic, political and social circles in all countries represented in the Latin American and European Parliaments;

(e) as a corollary to all the above measures, the countries represented in the Latin American and European Parliaments should endeavour to foster the activities of democratic groups and, as a result, the participation of all parties representing an effective and significant political force in the procedures for selecting and electing Members of Parliament and holders of high office.



