# Self-fulfilling prophecies of Terrorism
## That basic mistake that all countries commit

By Francesco Finucci

*Terrorist studies offer an important point of view to understand how self-fulfilling prophecies work in the field of foreign policy, homeland security and counter-terrorism. After studying five main cases, we concluded how self-fulfilling prophecies studied by W.I. Thomas can be categorized into two kinds: from grievance to terrorism and from non-terrorist threat to terrorist threat. However, in both cases the spiral of hate caused remains devastating. Consequently, a different approach is seems to be a prerogative, in order to effectively hinder the explosion of terrorism in any country.*

In 1920s, the American sociologist W.I. Thomas formulated his famous theorem: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". Academic literature has deeply analysed Thomas thought (just after having destroyed his career because of an accusation of adultery). However, years of counter-terrorism made clear policy makers' complete lack of comprehension of socio-political phenomena and how to deal with them.

Terrorism is a course. It is, because it affects an entire nation with a continuous fall to violence. On the other hand, it primarily is a political phenomenon, having been treated as a criminal and military matter by administrations all around the world. By now, several evidences proved this tendency, a dangerous method that often created long-lasting spirals of hate, because of the promotion by military officials, policy makers and scholars of technocratic and violent strategies that provoked irremediable damages.

# The origin of Islamic terrorism in Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine

### *1. Palestine*

The origin of Islamic terrorism in Palestine is a perfect case study to know how not to manage the terrorist threat. Lay movements were born during the 60s, in the wake of Arab-Israeli conflict. Among them, the most important groups - al-Fath and PLO - went on being the point of reference for Palestinians feeling oppressed by the Israeli government, especially after the humiliating defeat of the Six-Day War (1967). After thirty years of fight, Yasser Arafat's PLO became the organization leading the Palestinian National Authority, the governmental body representing Palestinians after Oslo Accords of 1993.

On the other hand, PLO and al-Fath reputation was already falling, since at least 1980s. This happened because of several internal and external reasons. First of all, the hard humiliation experienced by Palestinians during the last years of 70s. Thanks to the agreement between Egypt and Israel, the Egyptian president Begin had obtained the return of the Sinai Peninsula (Camp David Accords, 1978), but the Palestinian position and their will to recover territories lost during the war was simply ignored. It was a shock for Palestinians, a blow. But the international scenario had changed as well.

The Khomeinist revolution had changed balances in the Middle East, because of the radical, Anti-American Shi'ite Islam preached in the new born Iran (1979). Iran rapidly became one of the most important geopolitical actors in the ME, deeply influencing the entire area, especially Lebanon. Islamism was growing all around the region, but a trigger was going to make the situation explode. In 1987, the *First Intifadah* erupted in Palestine. It was the first signal of another form of rebellion against the Israeli domination, and it left a mark of disorganized desperation, the one of young men throwing stones toward Israeli military officers. But the situation was going to get worse. Seriously worse.

Among desperate people, two organizations started their activity in 1987: Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. They rapidly became the nightmare of Israeli citizens, carrying on an effective and violent campaign against the invaders. Moreover, Hamas became one of the most important political actors in Palestine, overthrowing Arafat and the PLO. They offered an alternative point of view, strictly linked with Sunni Islam and able to give a meaning to Palestinian suffering, canalized in a new form of struggle, that complex Quran's concept named *jihad*. This way, the fight against Israel enrolled in religious conflicts scenario.

The relationship with other terrorist Islamist organizations has never been has clear as expected. Accordingly with Jonathan Schanzer, Hamas has become one of the many al-Qaida's allies, interlinking the two movements through joint military trainings. However,

what Schenzen misses to explain is the complexity of such an alliance. First of all, the harsh response given by Hamas to al-Qaida's violence during the first years of its foundation (1990s). The mounting violence carried on by al-Qaidists in Saudi Arabia was strongly criticised by Hamas, leading to the fall of consensus around al-Qaida network. And in 2009, the situation even got violent, especially in Gaza: clashes exploded between the al-Qaidist related group Jund Ansar Allah and Hamas, accused of laxity in application of the Islamic law. The iron relationship was more likely made of porcelain. Even the intuitive and corroborating idea of a strong alliance between Hamas and Hezbollah has fallen because of the Syrian civil war. Hezbollah was harshly blamed by Hamas, because of Hezbollah's support to Assad's regime. Consequently, we can easily find out that the reassuring principle of a unanimous hate speech against the Western Civilization doesn't meet expectations. It simply is unrealistic.

This thought has to be attentively evaluated: it strengthen the self-fulfilling prophecy effect. Since 70s, Israel had fought a frustrating war against groups that were gaining an important position in regional balances. PLO was an important actor in the attempt by the new-born Iran to export the revolution in Lebanon and detained other important relations. But other hostile plots were ongoing, and this way, a complex situation transformed itself in a real nightmare, because of a suicidal and arrogant policy choice: the Iron fist. Grievances led Palestine in the hand of two of the most violent and organized terrorist movements: Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Effects on stability in Israel and Palestine can be easily imagined.

## 2. *Lebanon*

The history of Islamism in Lebanon is not more edifying. Hezbollah took its first steps inside the region changing strategy and goals with time. As underlined by Hala Jaber (*Hezbollah*, Fourth Estate, 1997), Hezbollah hasn't born as an anti-Israel movement. The Party of God – the meaning of the word Hezbollah – perceived itself as a proxy movement of the Iranian new government. With time, it became the dominant Lebanon, until it absorbed Beirut pro-Iran militias (1985). During this transition, something happened, and the "State within the State" (as named by Hussain Abdul al-Hussain) took a different path from the one imagined.

During the period of Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), Hezbollah's militiamen had been deeply influenced by Palestinian groups, especially the PLO. It was a period of growing terror: PLO forces in Lebanon were accused of rapes, robberies and extortions. Therefore, when in 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon to expel the PLO, Israeli troops had been perceived as liberators from a hideous regime. But the situation rapidly changed. It's in 1982 that Khomeini tried to guide the inception of Hezbollah from Iran, while Hafiz al-Assad was

doing the same from Syria, protecting the Shi'ite Amal movement. Syria and Iran were entering the game for the control of Lebanon, but they did it exploiting the humiliation suffered by the Lebanese people on a daily basis. Israeli raids were continuous and brutal. They used the same method later experimented during the first and second Intifadah (1987-1993; 2000-2005). And an interesting connection can be found between these events.

On 16 October 1983, Israeli commanders entered in Nabatiyeh, in Southern Lebanon. They consciously imposed to the population their passage through the market, while the most sacred religious festival in Shi'ite Islam - the *Ashura* - was being attended by about 50,000 Lebanese. Shocked, Muslims started throwing stones at soldiers. All together: men, women and children. They even started piling burning tires in the streets to stop the convoy. Trucks were overturned. In the aftermath, Israeli forces called in reinforcements and started shooting: an incredibly wrong way to deal with rebels. But let's take a glance at what happened in Palestine about twenty years later. In 2000, the then chief of the right-wing party Likud, Ariel Sharon entered in the Temple Mount (Jerusalem), a sacred place for Muslims, escorted by hundreds of police forces. This act was considered an unacceptable provocation. Suddenly, the second Intifadah exploded, but now Israel had to face trained militiamen, and no more civilians throwing stones. That's an excellent example of how military repression could radicalise people more and more, literally inventing terrorism.


### 3. Afghanistan

The change of terrorism in Afghanistan is slightly more complicated. The origin of al-Qaeda still remains quite uncertain, but some elements seem to be commonly accepted as true. The first one is the remote origin of al-Qaida members: the fight against Russian invasion in 1979. Since then, resistance became the incubator for those who would have founded the network after the end of the war, in 1989. Combatants were the so-called *mujahidin*, accomplishing their duty to carry on the jihad against stranger invaders, having found a desolate, destroyed land leaded by a weak government. In such a scenario, Saudi Arabia and the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI) found a way to influence Afghanistan.

The arrival of mujahidin in Afghanistan had taken place during the transition period after the fall of soviet domination over the area. Talibans coming from different places were literally dumped by the countries they came from, in that region sought after empires since the XIX century. In 1994, Kandahar became the capital city of this organisation, the one of Quran students, the Talibans. It rapidly became a silent, dismal city, symbol of a new oppressive regime. A city where televisions were hanging from the entrance of the urban area, together with cassette films. Warlords had been overthrown, but a nightmare was

going to start.

As written by Guido Rampoldi, an Italian journalist at *Repubblica*: "History has no pity for failed states, carcasses on which many people parachute in order to pull out a pound of flesh" (see references). In fact, combatants didn't appeared suddenly, arising in a cloud of smoke. Let's take a glance at the situation in Afghanistan, in 90s. We read from Rampoldi:

> "In Kandahar and in the Southern region, there were Talibans, then trained and armed by the Pakistani army. In Kabul, there were Massud's Tajiks, supported by India, Iran and Russia. In the north-est, there was the Uzbek militia, ready to sell themselves to the best bidder. In the north-east, the Jalalabad Khanate, something like an opium poppy republic. Total stalemate. But this motionless scene suddenly was animated by a new, usually crucial factor: oil".

Afghanistan was the playground for a joint venture between the American Unocal, supported in his project by Henry Kissinger, and the Saudi enterprise Delta, both working with petrol. They had opted for a oil pipeline, running from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, the main state involved in the infrastructure. Many interests, as seen. Consequently, the Talibans – having been created by Pakistan to gain power in the region – found themselves rich. The source of money is still unknown, but, once barricaded in the area of Kandahar, they could bribe enemy commanders and units and enter the capital city, Kabul. Obviously, the elements of the story are more than these, as many as actors. What interests us is the involvement of Pakistan and the US. Among other things, Unocal, far from being omnipotent, nevertheless could come back in Afghanistan after the arrival of Karzai government. A curious coincidence.

How Talibans really are, it seems to be misunderstood by everybody. That's the conclusion that Rampoldi wrote about the Afghani instability. Once more, Let's read from his book:

> "Even Saudi government couldn't understand Talibans [...]. Members of the endless al-Saud family appeared in Kandahar in 1996, formally because of their will to attend falcon hunting in the Desert of Death. Shortly after, from the Arabic peninsula arrived through Dubai the hundreds of Toyota off-road vehicles that provide Talibans with mobility that their Tajiks enemies can't have. After that, appeared Saudi and Arabs: [they were] al-Qaeda troops. They passed through Karachi, identifying themselves as bird catchers [...], while Pakistani authorities pretended to believe it. It seemed to be a good deal for everybody. Riyadh could get rid of thousands of hotheads [...]. The Pakistani government enforced the military strength of Talibans, considered as their useful idiots. Americans could deceive themselves, thinking that Osama Bin Laden would have been inoffensive, until it remained in Afghanistan".

This way, Afghanistan reveals the true – double – nature of Terrorism as a self-fulfilling prophecy. This time, the mechanism involved doesn't transform a perceived terrorist threat in a real one, but it surely transform a non-terrorist challenge in a terrorist one. Betting on instability, dictators and warlords can be really, really dangerous, for regional power - Pakistan and Saudi Arabia - as for the most powerful nation in the world: the United States. Terrorism gets strength from grievances, humiliations and poverty. It is the weapon in the hands of poor people, thanks to its need for no sophistication and hierarchy. Networks as al-Qaeda have obtained an enormous advantage from this strategy, after a first experimental period and after the period of highly sophisticated attacks (as the 9/11).

This way, one of the most important al-Qaeda's bases of operation was set up. But, in conclusion, we can't miss a point that interlinks al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, bringing us back to the first kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: from grievance to terrorism. As reported by Rampoldi, the sense of humiliation exploited by al-Qaeda lies on a deeper, oldest historical suffering:

> "Bin Laden's project rides a resentment widely common in the Middle East, against the monarchies of petrol, considered hypocrite, corrupt and manipulated by the United States. On the other hand, it mirrors a painful, confused but understandable perception: that despite owning the necessary asset, petrol oceans […], arab people are wasting a unique opportunity to reconquer the central position in the world they lost".

We could not like this, but Arabs fight for a reason. Thinking about the as irrational savages or unrecoverable haters, or even as cynical opportunists would really make a solution impossible.

# Terrorism and social conflict in Europe: Italy and the UK

## 4. *Italy*

Italy has been one of the most interesting cases in the Cold War Europe. Trying to analyse as a unitary event the Italian history during the so-called first republic (1946-1992) is extremely hard. A first element to be analysed is the political situation in Italy. During the period we're interested in, Italian parliamentary system was based on three main parties: the Democratic-Christian Party (DC), the Socialist Party (PSI) and the Communist Party (PCI). Other parties plaid a relevant role, but we can consider three focal points: a Christian pole, divided in two groups (centre-left and centre-right), a legitimate left party, the PSI, divided as well (centre-left, linked to DC and left, liked to PCI) and a not legitimate left party (PCI). We could also think about the neofascist party MSI as a not legitimate party, but its characteristics were somehow similar to the ones of the PCI.

The entire First Republic has been spent by moderate political forces in order to avoid the country to be tear to pieces by extra-parliamentary movements. This struggle has put under stress both PSI and DC: PSI was constantly threatened by splits, while DC has been always divided in left-wing DC and right-wing DC. A political risk treated by dividing it in three different menaces to the internal security: popular revolt, left-wing subversion (supported by Soviet Union) and neofascism.

A popular revolt has been a serious risk during the first decade of Italian republican history. The Italian people were still armed, because of their fundamental role in the civil war having taken place during the period from 1943 to 1945. The disarmament effort had been only partially successful: remarkably, old weapons were returned, sophisticate weapons were not. Just in case, they could have become useful. This was the atmosphere, when the republic was taking its first steps. Consequently, the ask for democracy was rapidly set aside. While the realization of some institutional changes fixed by the new constitution was freeze, the control of the crowd was brought on in a military way. It is not a metaphor: anti-riot forces were then formed by ex-soldiers. Fatalities were the norm during protests, as a headstone put over the democratic growth of a country having been destroyed in its civic-mindedness. The principle of the freedom to protest had to be limited, and so was trade union freedom. Experiments of democratization inside factories as the one carried on by Adriano Olivetti were extremely rare. Industrialists simply used private police. With time, some of these problems were resolved, but violence in Italy has been a constant element until 1990s.

The need for social control was proportionate to the threat faced. This is a key fact to understand radicalization in terrorism. On the other hand, the resolution showed while facing dangers created unpredictable drosses. The first one was the limitation in thought expression, hidden under a veil of hypocrisy and respectability. Censorship took the forms of the absolute ban of political satire and harsh criticism, and it was directly linked with the repression of protests: they were complementary factors of the state building process being implemented. They tried to silence an unstable country, in a precarious balance between East and West.

Directly interlinked with repression of protest is the attitude toward the far left. The list of Italian governments having leaded Italy during the First Republic is quite impressive, considering the predominance of DC party over the parliament. The national solidarity that brought to the referendum between monarchy and republic (1946) and to the ratification of a new constitution (1948) had roughly fallen in 1949. During the period 1947-1953 Italian politics experienced a dreadful climax toward radicalization, and in this four actors scenario (government, far left, far right, population), the US threw gasoline on the fire. The American ambassadress Clare Boothe Luce went on spreading the phobia of communists, exploiting the weakness of the new State hitting it with both flatteries and menaces. We will see later how ambiguous the relationship with DC and MSI was, but the hate toward communism was a sincere and strong feeling, directly derived from the attempt by Eisenhower to compete with McCarthy's foolish messages to the American electorate. This hood of terror  brought to the systematic exclusion of the PCI from government, except the failed experiment of rapprochement during the first years of 60s, and the so-called "Compromesso storico" (Historic compromise), attempted by Aldo Moro (DC) and Enrico Berlinguer (PCI) and punished by the communist group Red Brigades with Moro's kidnapping and assassination. The exclusion of the left wing from government went on until the rise of the Socialist Party (PSI), leaded by Bettino Craxi. Such a anti-democratic structure led to the radicalization of the Italian society, tear off by the left and the right wings. The same happened to parties, hit by fragile alliances, the external influence by the US and Soviet Union, while violence grew rapidly in society.

However, the political and terrorist violence having hit Italy since 60s to 80s must not be considered as a mere consequence of social conflict. During the anti-communist crusade, dangerous relationships were born and grown. Relationships that brought inside secret services members of the MSI to improve their loyalty toward the American intelligence agency (the CIA), but also to involve them in active control of social clashes. Relationships with the intelligence grew up, even developing coups d'état plans, as happened in 1964 (Piano Solo) and 1970 (Golpe Borghese). Moreover, *stay behind* strategies were ongoing in Italy since 50s, having caused the birth of a paramilitary association, *Gladio*. This way, the

partially justifiable paranoia against far left violence had already provided a powerful instrument for the rise of militarist and neofascist organizations.

Considering these three elements, the explosion of terrorist acts having hit Italy until 1981 appears in the complexity it deserves. Far from being a stable balance, the situation roughed off remains a valid line of interpretation to understand how self-fulfilling prophecies of terrorism have taken place in Italy. Officially narrated as a period of joy, welfare and democracy, the period from 1946 to 1963 was in Italy a period of serious distortions in the development of a democratic society and State. Though invisible, the double layer of radicalization (inside institutions and opposition forces) became more and more violent and ideologically motivated. It finally resolved in a terrorist war, yet not entirely explained in its dynamics and instigators. In short, terrorism was not a phenomenon appeared casually and with no warning signs. It partially was the result of the perception of protests as a danger to be repressed with violence (from grievance to violence) and of the use of armed groups achieve public order goals, creating a hate spiral ending in terrorism (from non-terrorist to terrorist menace). A double curse on Italian society, having led the formation of normal left-right relationship to abort. With dramatic consequences.

### 5. *United Kingdom*

In August 2013, panic erupted in Yemen, followed by the temporary closure of British and American embassies. It was the response given to the terrorist threat raised by the end of *Ramadan* period, often linked with Islamic violence. Aryn Baker, journalist at *Times*, started her article writing that: "In a fragile country, the mere threat of a terror attack may be a boon to al-Qaeda". Absolutely true, but the work went on describing the dynamics of danger, recent evens and nothing more. It is an old topic of British journalism, the one of Yemeni terrorists, already raised in 2010. However, a brilliant article by Nu'man Abd al-Wahid promptly underlined British responsibilities, demolishing that confident attitude maintained by the UK in front of terrorism, as it was something having nothing to do with the kingdom. His work was titled: "The Rise of North Yemeni Islamism in Birmingham", and explained how Islamic schools (the *madrasas*) had been supported in Yemen by the Thatcher administration. As reported by Wahid, they were thought to be a good method to contrast other not relished parties (once more, the theory of the "useful idiot"):

> "Margaret Thatcher was enthusiastic for the people of the Middle East to, "build on their own deep religious traditions" as as not to "succumb to the fraudulent appeal of imported Marxism." She even went onto claim that the mujahideen (holy warriors) fighting the Soviet occupation in the 1980's were in "one of the most heroic resistance struggles known to history".

In the UK internal territory, this meant that the small Yemeni community arrived in '50s

and '60s was stimulated by the arrival of new teachers instructed by the then Yemeni minister of education, Abd al-Majid al-Zindani:

> "In sharp socio-political contrast to the vast majority of Yemenis in Birmingham, these teachers arrived here to implement the North Yemeni socio-political agenda, that is to 'indoctrinate' second generation Yemenis."

As underlined by Peter Bergen and Swati Pandev on *New York Times,* the topic of madrasas has become a myth of neoconservatism, a myth fueled by politicians as Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld. A Pakistani madrasa even received sanctions by the US treasury, because of its suspected terrorist activities. So, the construction of a negative myth of madrasas as terrorist training camps is comparable with the one of mosques as terrorist cells. It's a flat vision of events only fit for propaganda. On the other hand, it is a good element to start asking if the UK really supported states and groups having been involved in terrorist attacks. A brilliant article written by Nima Shirazi on *Muftah* gives an approximate but threatening vision of the phenomenon.

The article is titled "Margaret Thatcher & her dictator friends", and can be red here. It aims to argue against *The Economist*, having described the iron lady as "one of the great champions of freedom and liberty". Shirazi remembers all the dictators supported by Margaret Thatcher, and among them some names could be really interesting. The first one is the useful idiot par excellence, Saddam Hussain. Using reliable journals as *The Guardian* and *Financial Times*, *Muftah* reconstructed the sale of weapons and equipment to the Sunni leader then bombed until the destruction of Iraq, as a rebuke to not hinder American and British interests in the once controlled region. Even more important, Miss Thatcher supported Muhammad Zia-ul Haq, a ferocious dictator having ruled Pakistan from 1978 to 1988. Saroop Ijaz describes Zia's Pakistan this way: "Pakistani society and politics did not fade away or go giggling into the sea. They were destroyed very deliberately by the use of repression by the theocratic, tyrannical and maniacal dictatorship of Ziaul Haq". According to Ishaan Tharoor:

> "Lost in a Cold War fog, Thatcher, along with the U.S., supported the military government of General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan, helping prop up a South Asian generalissimo now seen as one of the chief architects of the Islamic radicalization in his country. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Zia became the point person for the Anglo-American fightback; under his watch, the Afghan *mujahedin* bloomed and seeds of a new era of terrorist militancy were planted".

This last fact helps us understanding an element we overlooked: the influence on terrorism of a reckless foreign policy. There are so many hate motivations having exploded because of

the lack of moral by diplomats, politicians and military officials that we can't enumerate them.

6. *Conclusions*

In 2012, Joseba Zulaika wrote the most powerful paper on terrorism I could read: "Mythologies of Terror: Fantasy and self-Fulfilling Prophecy in U.S. Counterterrorism". Zulaika wrote:

> "Counter-terrorism is a prime example of what Merton labeled "the Thomas Theorem" [...]. Once the situation is defined as one of inevitable terrorism and endless waiting, what could happen weights as much as what is actually the case: once a threat whose intention or possibility is unknown to us, is taken seriously, its reality requires that we must act on it. Terrorism is the catalyst for confusing various semantic levels of linguistic, ritual and military actions"

In Zulaika's words, we find some of the central elements in terrorism. First of all, terrorist attacks' black swan nature. They are black swans, meaning that they are unpredictable and that they create high damages. But the also are part of a phenomenon of radicalization and creation of the enemy. Terrorists are the wild savages menacing law, order and security. Subhuman experimenting the aestheticization of war, elevated in the art of explosion or in the geometrical beauty of targeted killing; following the bump of tribal chiefs to launch *fatwas*, or suffering military officials' hope to find the definitive weapon, the one leading the war that will be won by itself. During the first world war these weapons were ship, then they became planes, and now drones. Indeed, Zulaika mentions unmanned vehicles:

> "The latest in this technological aestheticization are the drones. Ten thousand feed above the sky, they are further step in the sensorial distancing from the targeted enemy. The enemy is no longer a real body even for the warrior attackers but now a mere image. The eyes perceives not the fatal consequences, but the precision of the goal, the geometry of the operation, the beautiful execution in reaching and destroying the target. Aesthetics is needed to shut up perception into what the framers of the event want to be perceived".

War is elevated by transforming politics in a aesthetic game, capturing men in the dangerous charm of conflict. This way, the American conception of its role in the world, the civil religion of American revolution clashes with the unitary nature of political power (legislation), and spiritual leadership (moral norms) in Islam. However, according to the analysis, it is much more than a civilization clash, more than a criminal and ideological threat. This is why Zulaika's work is so rare and important. He doesn't want to fight against terrorism, he wants to understand how it is born and how to cure the griefs where it originated from. He is right, because the only way to prevent terrorism is avoid making people suffer: when terrorism exploded, a law enforcement becomes mandatory, wasting resources and fueling the conflict. But according to Arie Kruglanski, the fundamental elements of terrorism are two: quest for significance and terrorist ideology.

We can try to act on ideology, supporting tolerance or demolishing the cells where ideology comes from, but  we would maintain and fuel reasons to feel hate: terrorism is an asymmetric method to carry on conflict, as guerrilla. There's no point in thinking that it will disappear using repression. It doesn't aim to the control over territory, it only want to hurt

the enemy enough to make it withdraw. Consequently, by using military or police force, we would have a short-term effect on military organization and a long-term effect on hate feelings.

Kruglankси explains what he means, while speaking about "quest for significance": social loss of significance, individual loss of significance, stigma or dishonour. In one word, grievance. It is not so difficult to understand that an humiliated community will inevitably split in those who want to improve the situation using violence, and those who want to do peacefully. Who will win, when military or police repression will come to break down the prestige of pacifist leaders?

The examples provided are discouraging, but they could finally evidence how ineffective and morally unacceptable the use of violence over violence is. Several patterns gave the same result:

*Self-fulfilling prophecies: from non-terrorist threat to terrorist threat:*

> *- from a subject (a) contrasting national interests of an external state, to a different one (b) then starting terrorist activity against the state:*
> *(a: Soviet Union and then Afghani tribes; b: al-Qaida)*
> *(a: socialist Arabs; b: Yemeni terrorists)*

> *- from an external power (a) contrasting national interests of another external power (b), to a subject (c) spreading terrorist ideology all around the world:*
> *(a: Soviet Union; b: United Kingdom; c: Zia-ul Haq)*

> *- from a subject (a) pursuing nationalistic goals, through terrorism or not, to a subject (b) pursuing ideological goals, through terrorism:*
> *(a: PLO, al-Fath; b: Hamas, Islamic Jihad)*

> *-from a subject (a) pursuing ideological goals, with terrorism or not, and supported by external power (b), to an opposite subject (c) pursuing ideological goals, with terrorism or not, supported by an opposite external power (d):*
> *(a: PCI, far left terrorists; b: Soviet Union; c: neofascist terrorists, Gladio; d: United States)*

*Self-fulfilling prophecies - from grievances to terrorist threat:*

> *- from a lack of terrorist threat to a terrorist subject (a):*
> *(a: Hezbollah)*

> *- from social clashes to terrorism activity:*
> *(Italy)*

Entire countries experienced inconceivable sufferings because of wrong policies and political choices. Zulaika properly investigated the ineffectiveness of this conception of counter-terrorism, and his paper remains a brilliant work about the topic. What I would like to underline before closing this paper is another underestimated element. There is a spiral of hate deeply entrenched in terrorism, interlinking State (counter-terrorist) and

non-state (terrorist) violence, as well as violence committed by rival terrorist groups.

Violence creates pain, pain creates hate and hate creates violence. This vicious circle can't be ignored by policy makers, diplomats, police and military officers. It simply can't because of the two main characteristics of terrorism (burstiness and black swans), and because of the socio-political wants lying under terrorism. To win against a strong terrorist activity the only subject to be attacked is society itself. Even considering this strategy effective, what would happen to ethics, democracy, what would happen to the State? To defeat terrorism we could find ourselves orphans of everything we aimed to protect. Considering how still strong terrorism is, the erosive effect could be much more dangerous for democracy than violent groups. We could wake up realising that we became the monster we intended to beat.

# References

**Afghanistan:**

Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, Princeton University Press, 2010
Guido Rampoldi, *I giacimenti del potere*, Mondadori, 2006

**al-Qaeda:**

Fabrizio Minniti, *Il jihad è anche online. Al-Qaida e Internet,* Limes, 2013

**Hezbollah:**

Hussain Abdul-Hussain, *Hezbollah: A State within the State*, Current Trends in Islamist Ideology, vol. 8.
Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah. Born with a vengeance*, Fourth Estate, 1997

**Iraq:**

Ennio Di Nolfo, *Dagli imperi militari agli imperi tecnologici,* Laterza, 2007

**Italy:**

Simona Colarizi, *Storia del novecento italiano*, BUR, 2000

**Palestine:**

Vito Cirillo, *Palestina: dai fellahin ad Hamas*, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2005

**Raricalization:**

Clark McCauley, *Pathways toward radicalization,* START, 2008

**Terrorism:**

Arie Kruglanski, Xiaoyan Chen, Mark Dechesne, Shira Fishman, Edward Orehek, *Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance*, Political Psychology, vol. 30, 2009
Gary LaFree, *Discussion Point: Black Swans and Burstiness. Countering myths about Terrorism,* START, 2012
Joseba Zulaika, *Mythologies of Terror: Fantasy and Self-fulfilling Prophecy in U.S. Counterterrorism*, Kroeber Anthropological Society, 2012