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IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN MILITARY
(ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CHILE, AND URUGUAY)

by Genaro Arriagada
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At the core of the military profession is the concept of war, or if you prefer, "the organized use of violence." Janowitz has pointed out with good reason that any nation develops its own military doctrine, at the centre of which is a given idea of war. The concept of war is very dynamic and variable, and can be altered in response to many different factors--social, political, technological, etc.

One of my fundamental hypotheses is that, from a given concept of war, it is possible to infer, if not a structured concept of the State and of the political and social system, at least a set of fundamental ideas sufficient to determine the particular kind of political behavior of military men and the general direction of their political compromises, alliances, and exclusions. In other words, we can understand political action the way the military themselves think about it, accepting how fundamentally their political involvement is conditioned by the kind of war they conceive themselves to be involved in.

The four armies I have studied have political ideologies whose roots are in military discipline and concepts. What follows is a summary of my research concerning two of those military conceptions: anticommunist war and geopolitical thought.

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The Militaries' Perspective of East-West Confrontation

The armies of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay have used the concept of war against communism to justify their military regimes. In the following pages, we will describe this conception of war against communism and discuss the origins of these ideas.

The concept of revolutionary communist war is today identical among the armies of the Southern Cone. Such a conclusion can be derived from a review of statements and speeches by ranking military personnel and through a study of military writing published in the journal organs of the armed forces. In that conception, communist war is described as having, among others, the following basic characteristics: first, Latin America's social and economic reality is neither the origin nor the justification for subversion, but a factor which the communists utilize; second, subversive communist war has as its objective the control of the population, using terror as its primary political instrument, and having an ample spectrum of means defined as "psycho-social"; third, it is a war in which the definition of purposes proclaimed by the enemy and those who have the luck to be called "third party" are tinged with strong moral connotations; fourth, it is a total war, with many and varied meanings; fifth, it is a war against an indefinite enemy, or better, one difficult or almost impossible to determine.

Subversion and Social Protest. In the description of this conception of communist war, we find an omnipresent idea which can be labeled "a conspiratorial vision of history." The phenomena which are understood to threaten the security of the Latin American states, and which the armed forces believe they should confront, are the will and intelligent action of the communist movement, and not Latin America's economic and social problems.

"The renewed communism of the Bolshevik Revolution of October, 1917 constitutes, in the events of this century, the direct or indirect, visible or obscured, source of the subversion in the world today," asserts the ruling junta in Uruguay.¹ "The causes [of terrorism and subversive war]," adds a Chilean colonel, "are generally ideological, and in order to justify it, they plead social, economic and political aspects, which no one of any level of culture should be deceived by."²

Brazilian General DePaula e Couto extends the argument, stating that communist subversion affects not only the so-called under-developed nations, but also the more developed nations such as the United States, Italy, France, and Canada. "Therefore," he concludes, "it is not poverty which causes so many protests. . . ." He warns that the catch-phrase "the success of the communists is the result of social injustices" is a weapon of international communism's psychological war destined "to drive the democratic government to a mortal patronization of the communist apparatus, to which, moreover, it entrusts a halo, presenting it as a reaction to the social poverty, when in reality it is the appendix of a dictatorship."³

Struggle for Control of the Population. One of the distinctive traits of this new war is that, as distinguished from its predecessors, it is a struggle for control of the population. According to an Argentine general, "while for Clausewitz war is like a single battle enlarged, represented by two warriors, where either one, intervening with the use of physical force, tries to force the other into submission, it is for Mao, on the other hand, the capture of the mind of the adversary and the will of his commanders."⁴ A Brazilian general, talking not of Mao but of revolutionary war in general, says that it is a new type of war, "of mostly a socio-political character," whose objective is "the physical and psychological conquest of the populations. . . ."⁵

In this war, therefore, the fronts of the struggle offer no physical positions to take or occupy. There are no bridges, no hills, no cities or strategic positions which may serve to measure defeat or victory. The only measure is the conquest of the population.

Because the objective of war is to conquer the inhabitants and to win their adherence, the means of this struggle must be essentially political. The people are thus the object of implacable manipulation. In some cases, the communists will flatter them, and offer them the fulfillment of all their unsatisfied aspirations. The communist's false promises are a formidable weapon not only for winning the confidence of the population, but also for crippling the political system and the economic apparatus of the nation under attack.

However, the subversive strategy consists not only of promises, but a mix of pacific and violent means as well. This gives rise to a very complex war, one in which man is managed and conditioned by hope and fear, and by the insecurity which the subversive organization deliberately fosters as the preparatory stage after which it will offer its protection. It is a war in which any human weakness can be manipulated, one in which the goal is to manage the "adjustment of the population." "Neutralized, demoralized, and infiltrated by subversive activities, the population becomes concomitantly submitted to a process of adjustment which ends by exerting control over all members of the community, confining it in a network of parallel hierarchies which proceeds to exercise in itself an unmerciful inquisitorial pressure."⁶ The military journals are flooded with articles which study these communist tactics, under the heading of psychological war, cultural war, or other such categories. With

Ho Chi Minh, says an Argentine general, the communists found "a political strategy of social psychology. He produces a total theory using techniques of mass communication . . . where sociology, psychiatry, psychology, the sciences and techniques of mass communication serve to cleanse the mind of all deviations."⁷

A Moral War. In speeches and in the innumerable articles examining this concept of war, the idea is ever present that the armies are fighting a moral struggle. Subversion is neither exclusively nor predominantly political, it is a problem of the wickedness and debility of human nature. An Argentine rear admiral states that ". . . In effect, we are at war. But to say that it is a war against communism, for example, is an oversimplification. We are at war against an historical circumstance, against the negative characteristics of the human condition, against we ourselves . . . this war [against subversion] is necessary more than ever to free the soul. It struggles to convince more than defeat. . . . At the heart of the matter is an incorporeal question: play on the will, the stupidity, the evil, and the perfectibility of humankind."⁸ An Uruguayan general says that "the subversion is before all and above all an intellectual and moral phenomenon, a spiritual problem."⁹ Within this war between the virtues and vices of the human condition, there is a clear idea of where good and evil lie, and without exception, the supporters of counter-subversive war greatly oversimplify this matter. Communism, writes an Argentine colonel who subsequently became a most influential general, "attempts to substitute the reign of materialism for the reign of spiritualism; rancor and apprehension instead of love and trust; war as a substitute for peace; chaos in place of order; false fronts for truth; arbitrariness in lieu of justice; intransigence substituted for understanding; a return to slavery, abolishing liberty."¹⁰

The military brand not only the communist doctrine as evil, but also the persons who support it. The communist enemy has as his advantage his complete lack of scruples and morality. The methods which he uses for the conquest of the population are repugnant, because communism is not only a political movement and an intellectual tendency, but above all, it is a moral fact.

"Marxism," said Augusto Pinochet, "is not merely a mistaken doctrine, as so many we have had in history. No. Marxism is an intrinsically perverse doctrine; therefore, anything flowing from it, regardless of how healthy it may appear to be, is corroded by the venom that gnaws at its roots."¹¹

As defined in the speeches and writings of armed forces officers of the region, communism is "a cancer," "a scourge" like syphilis, a "prurient scab,"¹² a "sect." As put on the record by the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, "the Commission members heard many high national authorities speak of 'Marxism' (generally speaking) as if that word designates a felonious activity."¹³ The Marxist concept, to the Commander-in-Chief of the Uruguayan army, is "always more immoral,

dehumanizing, and repugnant."¹⁴ "Murderous ideas," decried a military head of state.

This ideological perversity translates in a very concrete manner into evil practice: "To be successful [in the communists' conquest of power]," said an advisor of the Argentine National War College, "there is no concern that money as a means is used as a bribe, or that women are used as prostitutes. The most common arm which the Soviet secret services use is the arm of vice: drugs, pederasty, nymphomania, lesbianism, etc. . . ."¹⁵

The inevitable correlation of this description of the doctrine, and the political practice which it inspires, is proof that its supporters are morally inferior, or better, lacking in moral norm. The Commanders-in-Chief of Uruguay referred to members of subversive groups in the following terms: "miniscule, irascible groups, failures and resenters. . . , a small number of fanatics, adventurers, and delinquents. . . . fear, hate, and evil are the essential resentful elements of the MLN-Tupamaros against man and society. . . . a cruel enemy, cunning and treacherous, consumed with hate. . . , a small minority of reactionaries of a misguided mentality. . . . the heart of the inner life of the organization . . . uncovers a repugnant corner of sordid baseness, disloyalty, felony and immorality."¹⁶

The moral decomposition of the society doesn't end with the communists, but extends widely into the political centre among the proponents of liberalism. One of the more notable aspects of this vision of counter-subversive war is the manner in which the militaries escalate the struggle into one against the political centre, which they accuse of being utilized, consciously or unconsciously, by the communist movement. Any attitude of the centrist groups is presented as the consequence of an erroneous political conception, but especially as a result of profound moral weakness. Thus, this additional dimension of conflict within the concept of counter-subversive war also takes the form of a moral complaint, characterized, in the same manner as the former, by extreme oversimplification.

Between the declared enemy and the forces who struggle against subversion lies an enormous gray area, inhabited by the vast fauna of "the crypto-communists, the pro-communists, the 'fellow travelers,' and the 'utilizable fools' . . . yoked by sentimental charity, passing under many and varied motivations: ambition, stupidity, snobbery, fidelity, professional or economic interests, etc. . . ."¹⁷ It is a camp rife with "ineptitude, lack of memory, and the incoherent liberal democratic sentimentality of the noncommunist nation."¹⁸

A Total War. This war against communism is total, and takes many different forms.

It ends with complete and conclusive defeat. The intrinsically perverse character of communism makes impossible any end to the

conflict short of complete surrender by the defeated. In the words of General Pinochet, assuming that "the error [of Marxism] is intrinsic, and in that way, global . . . it is not conducive toward any possible dialogue or compromise."¹⁹ If the enemy lacks ethical attributes, and if his conduct isn't governed by reason but is beset by a profound disequilibrium, psychic and moral, then it is impossible to fit it within the norms, treaties, or agreements which would assure some form of co-existence. Nothing but an extreme solution is possible. It is necessary to annihilate him to the last vestige: "Today as yesterday, the Argentine army continues to press its struggle for liberty and justice. The enemy is the opposite. He operates under the shadow of crime and cunning actions. He has no flag. He denies everything moral. But today as yesterday, the Argentine army maintains the struggle, annihilating unto the last vestige those who ignominiously intend to harass the majesty of the Republic and the dignity of its people."²⁰

It is political, economic, and psycho-social war, using military means only as a last resort. The strategy of the subversives is one of their weaknesses: they are not attempting to win an armed confrontation. That would be the equivalent of suicide. The war begins as a non-military aggression designed to destroy and disintegrate the fundamental bases of society. The war is thus total in the sense that it fights at length against the livelihood of a nation. It is a "total communist political war . . . which so often uses satire and loaded dice like cybernetics and electronic technology . . . [and which] fundamentally attacks the individual and the society, trying to capture the human soul in order to subject it to the destructive influence of an essentially materialistic doctrine. . . ."²¹

The course of the subversion, therefore, does not necessarily involve warfare, nor is it exclusively military in nature. It is an action occurring in all realms of society. If the subversion makes use of political, economic, psycho-social and military means, argues Brazilian General Golbery do Couto e Silva, it is necessary to design a national security policy which has as its priority a Grand Strategy, into which would be incorporated "as much military strategy as economic strategy, political strategy as psycho-social strategy." In this way, he concludes, "the strategy, at its heart, like war itself, has to be indivisible and total."²²

It is a conflict in which one cannot distinguish periods of peace and periods of war. If the war embraces all of the activities of the society, the inevitable conclusion is that it will not be possible to distinguish between periods of peace and periods of war. With or without armed confrontations, everything is a part of the conflict of war. War is total in a larger sense than it ever was before. It has transformed itself into the normal state of nations, and peace is the extraneous, almost impossible, exception. "The boundaries between war and peace," said an Uruguayan general, "have disappeared, to the imputation of war as the permanent state in the womb of the nation. In effect, according to Leninist concepts

applied in a systematic and effective form by international communism, peace is nothing more than the continuation of war by other means. . . ."23 This fundamental change in the nature of war and peace is the result of actions by the international communist movement. "For the western world, war appears as a continuation of politics; on the contrary, in the Marxist concept politics is the continuation of war . . . the free world understands war as the exception to the rule, whereas for communism the exception is peace."24

It is an endless war; Marxism is permanent aggression. All that has been said up to now leads us to understand that the war which communism has imposed upon the nations which it wants to conquer is an endless war. Different from all previously known bellicose conflicts, revolutionary war doesn't know a beginning or end. Subversion always lies dormant, weakening and undermining the society politically, economically, and psycho-socially. Subversive war is, as an Argentine general has defined it, an "unending strategy." Time is of no interest to the communist strategy; it only seeks to obtain the gradual disintegration of the fundamental nuclei of a society, in this way predisposing itself to the inhabitants in order to capture their psyche.²⁵ This endless war finds its foundation in original Marxist-Leninist philosophy: "In accordance with Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the final victory of communism is an historical determinism. Therefore, its aggression is permanent, and the time factor is thus very relative. It is more important to maintain the subversive process in various gradations and disguises until an opportune moment permits intensification to the desired level, ending in the taking of power."²⁶ In this same mode, General Pinochet, after having defined Marxism as intrinsically perverse, argues: "It is, moreover, a permanent aggression, currently at the service of Soviet imperialism. . . ."27 An Uruguayan military man describes this unending war in these terms: "Communism, without hurry and without pause, has more than any other the capacity to work clandestinely. Today it survives, today it is in our corner, and by winning today, like yesterday and tomorrow, you may be assured that the basis of our nation has been, is now, and will be attacked by this common enemy."²⁸ "The declaration of war which Marxism-Leninism has made toward the Western world," said the military government of Uruguay, "has the character of permanent aggression, according to the original affirmation made by Karl Marx in 1848."²⁹

A War Against an Indeterminate Enemy. Another fundamental characteristic of this peculiar and undefinable war is that it involves an indeterminate enemy who is very difficult to identify. "Formerly," said a Chilean military tribunal, "any state or any competing group knew who its enemy was and where to find him; victory was thus made possible by the use of all resources of war, moral and material. Today there is no physical line which separates the two camps; the line which marks the difference between friend and foe is found, generally, in the heart of the nation, in the same city, in the working place, in the bosom of the family and, also, infiltrated in intelligence agencies and in social, political,

cultural and religious organisms, occupying at times positions of vital importance to the lifeline of the nation. . . ."30 According to the Chief of Staff of the Brazilian army, "the enemy is undefined, uses mimicry, adapts himself to any environments, and uses all means, licit and illicit, to obtain his objectives. He disguises himself as a priest, a student, or a peasant, the vigilant defender of democracy, or as an advanced intellectual, as pious as an extreme protestant; he goes to the country, to the schools, to the factories and churches, to the Bishops' throne or the judgeship; if necessary, he will use a uniform or a business suit; in the end, he will take any role which is considered convenient, to deceive, to lie, and to trap the good faith of the Western nations."31

The factors which contribute to this indeterminability are diverse. On the one hand, the tactics of communism: its perverse and treacherous nature which it uses to infiltrate on a grand scale all the nuclei of society. However, the enemy finds his terrain very propitious in an environment which has people, movements, or institutions which, although formally distinct from Marxism, know that by their works they contribute to its success, facilitating its work of destroying the national character, paving the way for infiltration or, worse yet, weakening the decidedly anti-communist forces.

Infiltration is described as one of the most efficient and widely used tactics of communist subversion. "Through this," writes a Brazilian general, "the international communist movement endeavours to position the enemy inside our own trenches. The communists describe it as 'the long march through the institutions.'"32

The list of the favorite targets of this infiltration is interesting: the representative organizations of the working class or the middle class, labor unions, universities and academic centres, the liberal press, the left and centrist political parties, and the Catholic Church. Among those elements which strongly contribute to the enemy strategy, special consideration is given to legal campaigns on behalf of imprisoned politicians, which, although controlled, are totally infiltrated by the communist enemy. Faleroni says that the "legal defense of subversive elements" forms a conspicuous part of the struggle of those communists fighting on "the psycho-political front."33 A Brazilian defense minister referred to them as "constant onslaughts to destroy or make useless the national security structure. They question the spheres of competence, they suggest doctrine modifications, and they permit malicious campaigns of discredit of the intelligence and security organs, attempting to present them as torturing animals, to disgrace them before the nation."34

European Contributions to the Perspective

The anti-communism of the armies of the Southern Cone is not a new phenomenon; on the contrary, it is a constant force, with roots in the 1920s.

In Argentina, the two leaders of the 1930 revolution, Generals Uriburu and Justo, were profoundly anti-communist. Uriburu approached it from an ultranationalist point of view; likewise, the liberalism of Justo maintained that there was no room for the communists. The group of officers which unleashed the military coup of 1943, and Colonel Perón, were in the same way intransigent anti-communists. The military which overthrew the Perón regime in 1955 did not signify a change in this tendency.

In Brazil, militant and active anti-communism in the armed forces spans nearly the entire century. In 1935, a notable movement was uncovered within the army motivated by what was to become known as the "rash attempt at communism," a military uprising carried out by a group of sub-officials and loyal soldiers inclined toward the Communist Party, which culminated in the deaths of a set of officials and soldiers. Subsequently, in the celebration of any anniversary of "the rash attempt" and in the cult of its victims, the army has found an opportunity for renewing strong anti-communism, which serves at the same time as a unifying force.³⁵

In Chile, anti-communism among army officers is more difficult to investigate. This is due to the tradition of military submission to civilian control, which required that officers not express political opinions. Within the framework of Chilean democracy, an anti-communist declaration by army officers would have been poorly received by even conservative political groups, and would perhaps have been more than sufficient for the Senate, responsible for approving the promotions of higher officers, to put an end to the military careers of the authors of the declaration. Nevertheless, it is clear that "military anti-Marxism has existed in Chile since the 1920s. There are examples of it during the three decades prior to 1970, but prior to 1973 it never surfaced to the point where a military institutional stance threatened civilian control of national affairs. Anti-Marxism did, however, serve as the principal reason for sublimated, long-term political interest on the part of the military."³⁶ Of special interest in this regard is the period 1924-1932, in which Chile experienced a breakdown of its historical constitutionalism which even included a military dictatorship (1927-1931), in which uncompromising anti-communist statements by the military and the ruling military leaders were common.³⁷

But if anti-communism is an old attitude among the military officers of the Southern Cone, the current structured vision of the communist phenomenon is new. Never before has anti-communism become a military theory within the armed forces of the region. Two characteristics of this theory merit special attention.

First, its high degree of systematization. The theory of anti-communist war which we are discussing is a highly structured whole from which emanate considerations that go far beyond its apparent objective--the defeat of communism--to become an essential contribution toward a theory of the State, society, the political process, the military ethic, and relations between political power and military power.

Secondly, the theory deals with a vision of the communist problem in military terms, we should say exclusively military terms. Communism is reduced to the condition of internal aggression at the service of a foreign power. All of its activities, armed or unarmed, clandestine or legal, are arranged within a vision of protracted war, where political means have more importance than the exchange of gunfire. The struggle against communism is perceived as a professional task of the armies in the same way as is war between nations, with the important qualification that the first is a prevailing daily task, while the second is not very likely to happen.

But what are the origins of this highly structured theory of communist war? It should first be pointed out that the theory which we have presented is clearly very similar, if not identical, to the so-called "French counter-subversive doctrine" developed by French military officers during the Algerian war (1951-1962). The principal texts which express this vision of revolutionary or modern war (names which meant essentially the same thing) were writings by Colonels Gabriel Bonnet, Charles Lacheroy, Roger Trinquier, J. Nemo, and Antoine Argoud, Generals Lionel-Martin Chassin and Henri Naverre, Commander Jaques Hogard, Captain Andres Souris, Claude Delmas, and a host of others.

The French counter-subversive doctrine has been described thus: "first, since the early 1950s a nuclear stalemate between East and West has rendered nuclear war most unlikely. In fact, the most probable form of war which the West will be forced to fight (indeed, which it is already fighting) is subversive, revolutionary war. Second, the universal revolutionary war now in progress is unlike conventional war in that its primary objective is not defeat of the enemy army but physical and moral conquest of the population. Third, the same revolutionary war is being conducted by international communism and may be characterized as permanent and universal. . . . Fourth, in order to defend itself against the communist foe, the West must do the following: it must adapt to its own purposes some of the techniques of the enemy, especially in regard to propaganda, indoctrination, and organization; and it must perfect a Western ideology with which and for which to fight."³⁸

The ways in which this doctrine came to the armies of the Southern Cone are varied. First, by the institutional decision of adopting and popularizing it within the armed forces. Such seems to have been the case in Argentina. According to the writings of Argentine army colonel Mario Horacio Orsolini, "the theory of revolutionary war . . . was offered and adopted as a hope for the Argentine Army. It was named to fill the vacuum produced by the disappearance, almost completely, of the possibilities of a war between our nation and our neighbors."³⁹ Referring more concretely to "the scope and level of diffusion" to which this theory strives, Orsolini maintains that it descended until it reached the last level (of the organic structure of the army), including the troop personnel. Finally, we should note, Orsolini's criticism of the

adoption of the French doctrine is that of an anti-communist officer. He expressly warns against considering the struggle against communism as mistaken and inconvenient.

In Brazil, we have no such explicit evidence to document an institutional decision by the army to adopt this doctrine. In fact, however, a series of developments suggest a similar if not identical decision. Brazilian military journals constantly contain translations of articles by French authors supportive of that doctrine, and there is frequently only a brief lapse between the publication of the original article and its Portuguese translation.⁴⁰ Also, some of the military men active in the elaboration of thought on the subject explicitly recognize the important contribution received from the French school. For example, General De Paula e Couto, one of the more influential Brazilian military authors to write about subversion and internal war, pointed out at the end of one of his works that his sources had been "above all French, based on the experience of Algeria and Indochina. . . ."⁴¹ Bibliographic references to French military journals and to authors identified with that counter-subversive school suggest an influence on the Brazilian military similar to that on the armed forces of other nations.⁴²

In other cases, the publicizing of French counter-subversive thought has been the goal of private editors. Particularly interesting in this sense has been the action of an Argentine publishing house specializing in military themes and having a great audience in the armed forces, which has translated and published the works of Colonel Roger Trinquier, works characterized by the author's extremely brutal vision of counter-subversive struggle and by his intent to legitimize the use of torture.⁴³

One of the major--and surely most effective--popularizers of the French counter-subversive doctrine has been the novelist Jean Larteguy. The two works of Larteguy linked most directly with French paratroopers in Indochina and Algeria, The Centurions and The Praetorians, are cited in all analyses of French participation in those wars.⁴⁴ They contain a novelized discussion of the principal affirmations of the doctrine which we are analyzing. This function of popularization, found throughout Larteguy's novels, has been detailed in North America by William Polk who, referring in 1965 to the origin of academic literature on counter-insurgency, said that "probably the whole mass of literature on this field has been less read and has exercised a lesser influence than Jean Larteguy's The Centurions," and "that Larteguy has made it possible for us to read Roger Trinquier."⁴⁵ Returning to the Southern Cone, the importance of Larteguy's novels in the formation of ideas on subversion among the region's armies has been detailed to me by Guillermo O'Donnell concerning Argentina,⁴⁶ and by Methol Ferre concerning Uruguay.⁴⁷ It is not surprising that a book by the Junta of Commanders-in-Chief of Uruguay, which denounces communist subversion, contains only three epigraphs: one of Sun Tzu, another of Fidel Castro, and another of Jean Larteguy.⁴⁸

Finally, but certainly no less important, a brief reference must be made to the North American military training received by the armies of the Southern Cone. As is known, the United States since 1960 has redefined its military policy with respect to Latin American nations. According to the then Secretary of Defense in 1967, "the absence of a major external threat to this hemisphere also has helped us to focus the energies of the Rio Treaty nations toward the widely shared problem of armed insurgency. Indeed, another major change in our policy reflects the need to deal with the threat of externally inspired insurgencies. This threat has been a major challenge to some of our Latin American allies, and we have tried to help them by providing training, advisers and assistance in the equipment and techniques of counter-insurgency."⁴⁹ Our opinion--which will not be discussed here in detail--is that despite this policy, the United States did not develop its own counter-insurrection ideology; there exists no proper "North American counter-subversive doctrine." But was it at the North American training centers where the French doctrine was transmitted to the militaries of Latin America?

The Genesis of Geopolitical Thought

In the armies of the Southern Cone, geopolitik is one of the more important elements in the "body of specific and determined knowledge" which is at the center of the military profession. A compulsory assignment in the Schools of High Command, it is a subject of recurring interest for the regular armies. This interest is surprising, especially if one compares the importance which the military attributes to geopolitik with the negligible interest which the civil elites of those nations assign to it. The matter is equally surprising at a time when there exist in the armies of the United States and Western Europe practically no works which analyze strategic and tactical problems from this perspective. As has been said with good reason, "Latin America has become in a very real sense the last refuge of geopolitical thinking since the post-World War II decline in the respectability of geopolitics."⁵⁰

We will begin by making some references to the origins of this discipline and to its most distinct features. Our discussion, however, will be confined to German geopolitical thought, because--as will be seen later--the geopolitical elaborations of Southern Cone military officers are a continuation of this school of thought.

The Prussian influence on the armies of the Southern Cone is a well-known fact. The armies of Chile and Argentina were re-structured and long developed under the advice of German military missions. It is interesting to consider the development of the Brazilian army, because while the growth of professionalization took place under the leadership of French military missions, the Brazilian army developed a great interest in German geopolitical theory.

Geopolitik arose as a discipline in the last years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Its birth appears related to three factors: the development of geography and territorial consciousness, Social Darwinism, and the nationalism

of the second half of the nineteenth century. These elements constitute the principal intellectual outpourings which nourished European militarism at the end of the century, especially German militarism.

Geopolitik, as its name implies, was associated with the development of geography as a science and its growing importance amongst academics, the military, and politicians. The nineteenth century had as one of its fundamental characteristics the development of territorial consciousness. This was as much a result of nationalism as of liberalism. With respect to liberalism: "The American and French revolutions opened a new era, in which national states are based on clear-cut territorial sovereignty solely in the name of the nation."⁵¹ Regarding nationalism, on the other hand, the essential component of the nation-state was control over specific territory, motivated by a variety of factors ranging from tradition to racial and cultural identity, from unity of religion to unity of language, or the idea of a so-called "national frontier." These motives legitimized the territorial disputes which gave rise to wars between nations.

Aided by the development of mathematics, geography gave importance to the riches of the land, to the climate, to the quality of mineral resources, to population and race. It also specified distances and the obstacles and problems encountered in integrating the interiors and the frontiers, and in making the nation-state into a tightly interconnected territorial space.

The increasing importance that geography was acquiring in military circles was strengthened by another development in the social sciences: "Social Darwinism." This "Social Darwinism" is elusive and contradictory. Its main idea was that the same laws which govern biology also govern the lives of nation-states. But from this generalization were derived many varied conclusions. "Darwinian ideas were often used to reinforce or merely adorn arguments substantially derived from quite other sources."⁵² Such analogies could serve to justify the policy of "laissez-faire" in economics and in politics, or to sustain "gradualism" in social and political change, or to exalt wealth as proof of the success of the struggle for survival, etc.

But the major impact of "Social Darwinism" was reserved "for those arenas of rivalry between nations or races."⁵³ In this sense, its influence was particularly important in the arena of military thought. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many military men, "not content with reliance on the old argument of security in defending their military budgets and preparations, became philosophers, and found in Darwin a boundless and apparently indisputable 'raison d'etre' for their existence and interests--for a war of all nations against each other. Thus the foundation and justification of military institutions and practices were made immediately identical with the very explanation of human existence: the struggle for existence, 'natural' selection, and the survival of the fittest."⁵⁴

Darwinism not only maintained militarism but also succeeded in changing the scope of geography, which under its impetus ceased to be a mere descriptive science and was converted into an instrument for action. In effect, the idea of the State as a biological organism gave a new meaning to territory. The struggle by the State for space was the equivalent of the struggle by the species for its survival. Territorial growth was a demonstration of force, of virility, of the ability to survive and triumph. Conquest and annexation were legitimized in the name of natural law. Geography was the conscience of the state--its instinct, we should say--orienting itself toward where it could grow.

Social Darwinism also exerted an influence upon nationalism. "Every State (irrespective of whether it was orientated along the rational or the romantic concept of the nation) had acquired a specific identity, had become a specific organism, subject to the natural laws of life and death, growth and decay. And Social Darwinism provided a plausible theory, which apparently confirmed all these assumptions scientifically."⁵⁵ Finally, Social Darwinism tended to strengthen the authoritarian and anti-individualistic tendency predominant in European nationalism during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Germany experienced a glorification of nationalism and the nation-state which has, with good reason, been called dangerous and repulsive. Huntington has described this change in German nationalism as follows: "A limited and conservative ideology had given way to one which was nationalistic and aggressive. Materialism, bellicosity, the glorification of violence and war, worship of naked Macht superseded the more reasonable, idealistic, and humane elements in the German spirit. Mommsen, Droysen, Sybel, Treitschke, Nietzsche supplanted Goethe, Schiller, Kant, and Clausewitz."⁵⁶

In this world--where war was inevitable, a condition imposed by nature, and, at the same time, the key to the progress of humanity--might made right. And inasmuch as power was the essence of the State, the primary and fundamental duty of the State was to conserve and if possible expand that power, considering that through the attainment of those ends all actions were morally justifiable.

From this intellectual climate, and as an expression of it, arose geopolitik. Its founder was Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), a German biologist and geographer. The most important thinkers of this school--after Ratzel--were Rudolph Kjellen and Major General Karl Haushofer.

From the beginning, geopolitik associated itself with the organic concept of the State. Ratzel was the first to tie geography to the organic concept of the State, drawing upon Social Darwinism: "Space occupied by the State, or such space as a nation may occupy in the future, is the sovereign master that governs the activities of men, the growth and decline of nations in their struggle for survival, the destinies of mankind itself. In the life of nations man's relation to space finds its ultimate expression in war; for states struggle with each other in order to win space. This lust for space and more

space is," to Ratzel, "the inevitable consequence of the biological fact that the State itself is a living organism."⁵⁷ Thus, for the founder of geopolitik, the state was "a territorial organism."⁵⁸

For Kjellen, the organic concept of the State is valid without reservation. The Swedish professor was an implacable critic of liberalism's juristic vision of the State. The liberal school of Manchester, said Kjellen, "minimizes" the State, conceiving it only as the creator of the Constitution and the law, as the dispenser of legal protection and the guardian of public order. That, to Kjellen, was an insufficient and erroneous idea. The liberal vision of the State, he believed, exhausts itself in the analysis of the more wretched aspect of the State's life: its legal life. To him, the State is not a juristic-administrative being. It is much more than that. The State is a being which should be analyzed principally as power and in its relation to other states, and "this view of the whole State, the whole life of the State, Kjellen and his followers of the geopolitical school insist, can be achieved only in the revival of the visualization of the State as a biological organism, a superindividual being."⁵⁸

For General Haushofer the state is equally an organism, whose body is its territorial space and whose skin is its frontiers. It is a living being in a permanent struggle for its vital space. Such is the objective of all foreign policies of the State: "the fight for living space appears to be the most natural and logical foundation of any such [foreign] policy. For every nation is primarily concerned with the task of maintaining itself in a hostile environment, and since its very existence depends on the possession of an adequate space, the preservation and protection of that space must determine all its policies. If the space has grown too small, it has to be expanded. . . ."⁵⁹ In this struggle for vital space, moral restrictions do not exist. "It was Spinoza, not an imperialist, who said that only he who has power has right!"⁶⁰

From one point of view, the organic concept of the State, implicit in geopolitik, serves to legitimize conquest and territorial expansion. But from another view, concerning internal order, it conveys a totalitarian vision of the society: "This brings into relief the assertion of the geopolitical school that the state, as conceived by them, manifests itself first and foremost in the form of power in relation to other powers, that the state naturally strives and must strive for autarchy and for totalitarian regulation and control of the economic, social and cultural life of its citizens."⁶¹

Another essential trait of geopolitik which is of interest to our analysis is its development in relation to political science. In this sense, geopolitik should be considered part of the process of questioning the subordination of military power to civil power, characteristic of German militarism of the end of the past century and the first decades of this one.

Soon after its founding, geopolitik evolved from a science for studying the problems of national territory and frontiers, and into

a science of the State, capable of analyzing and helping to resolve the guiding of all, or the greater part of all, political affairs. This is not surprising, because--as will be shown later--geopolitik from its inception contained within itself the elements which would transform it--in the opinion of its supporters--not only into a political science, or into a "new name . . . for a special and limited field of political science," but into "a new method of political thought."⁶²

This evolution naturally had its stages. It is well known that there has always been a conflict between geography, which is thought to be static, and the State, an object essentially considered dynamic. Friedrich Ratzel pretended to resolve this contradiction in his concept of vital space: "Space," he said, "is the element in which rests the body politic and in which, to impulses of natural law, it expands and grows; [space] transforms itself into an inseparable part of the living organism which is the State; that space is vital space."⁶³

But the acceptance of this idea of the State as an organism in permanent struggle for vital space had another fundamental consequence: war and peace were inseparable. To the geopoliticians, the State at any moment is growing, decaying, or dying; "in this way there is no real distinction . . . between the political strategy for peace and the military strategy for war."⁶⁴

The separation which Clausewitz had made between politics and war, between the science of the commander and the arts of the statesman, no longer continued to be valid. This opened the way for the concept of total war. Military, cultural, economic, and diplomatic means--all are a part of the same process of war.

These concepts, already present in Ratzel, would find new development in Kjellen. He stated the same critique of geography: a known static which couldn't serve to explain the State. Kjellen continued to believe that the science of the State is political science. But he looked for a new discipline, "an empirical science of the state removed from the unilateral conceptions, as said depending on law, history or philosophy."⁶⁵ That science should study the State in five aspects, as "five elements of the same force, five fingers of the same hand, working together in peace and fighting together in war."⁶⁶ Those five aspects were the reich, the nation, the economy, the society, and the government. The first of these is difficult to define, because the word "reich" does not translate into English or Spanish. It is the land and territory, but in an expression which is at the same time physical and spiritual. Geopolitik is that part of the science of the State which deals with this aspect of the State. "Consideration of the State from the point of view of space implies the study of the growth of the realm [reich] as the body of the State. Historically considered, this means that geopolitik is concerned with the expansion by colonization or acquisition of neighboring territory."⁶⁷ Under these conditions it is perfectly comprehensible that Kjellen would write that "war is the laboratory of geopolitik, and general staffs must be academies of sciences."⁶⁸

Since that moment in which geopolitik proceeded to constitute itself into a discipline of knowledge concerning the State, it necessarily redefined its relations with geography. Geography became only one of many sciences to nourish geopolitik. If geopolitik were the science of the State, it was obvious, it would call upon more sources than just geography, notwithstanding that the latter was a science which, through its diverse branches, offered ample opportunity for enlarging the analytical perspective: physical, cultural, social, economical, and also political geography. To Haushofer, geopolitik was clearly an all-encompassing science: "[It] is a political technique based on the findings of geography--in particular political geography--history, anthropology, geology, economics, sociology, psychology, and many other sciences which, combined, are able to explain a given political situation."⁶⁹

Freed from the chains which bound it to geography, geopolitik rapidly soared toward what, from its inception (to use a term beloved by geopoliticians), had seemed its "manifest destiny": the science of the State. Naturally, to the extent to which States were embracing as their own matters new spheres of the life of society, and also to the extent to which conception of war became more total, the political pretensions of geopolitik were growing. Haushofer had already said that geopolitik should have connection with all that it affects "directly or indirectly, culture, power and economics of the state, and the struggle for power over the spaces of the earth."⁷⁰ It is at this moment that geopolitik takes the place of politics.

Geopolitik in the Southern Cone

Geopolitical elaborations in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile show, without a doubt, that the geopolitical thought of the region's military men finds its principal source of inspiration in the organic school to which we have been making reference. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the clarity and weight of this influence, there exist in Southern Cone geopolitics important differences with respect to the German school, a dissimilar orientation which would mature, throughout the period which we are studying, into a very interesting revision of the purpose of geopolitik.

Briefly stated, the geopolitics of the Southern Cone tended to accept, to a great degree, the organic concept of the State, characteristic of Ratzel, Kjellen, and Haushofer. At the same time, it did not accept the concept of war between nations. South America--in spite of the continual existence of border problems--is far from defining growth of the State in terms of the expansion of frontiers. In the Latin America of 1960-1975, there was little incidence of war between nations as a means of increasing the power of a State. In the rhetoric of Haushofer, the problem in Latin America is not one of expansion of vital space but one of internal order: the use of the vital space of the nation, its physical integration, the development of its natural resources, industrialization, etc. Beneath the weight of these realities, geopolitik in the hands of its military adherents in the Southern Cone changed its objective, transforming itself increasingly into a political science for the development of national power--national power equated not with the physical expansion of territory, but with security and development.

However, this transformation of geopolitik into a concept concerned with internal politics did not eliminate the factor of war, which as we have seen is at the centre of the discipline of geopolitik. In its South American revision, geopolitik continues to consider that, with or without exchange of gunfire, all is war. The enemies, however, were now situated principally in the internal front, or, as in the case of the communists, serving in the internal front but at the service of an international strategy of struggle for world hegemony.

It makes no sense--nor is it possible for reasons of space--to summarize here the whole of our investigation concerning the geopolitical thought of the area. We will limit our discussion, therefore, to a main development in each of three nations in the region: Chile, the geopolitical thought of General Pinochet; in Argentina, the vicissitudes of the organic concept of the State within the framework of a continually divided army; in Brazil, the book Geopolítica do Brasil by General Golbery do Couto e Silva, one of the most influential books published in Latin America in the past 20 years.

Geopolitik in the Chilean Army. Of all the armies of the Southern Cone, the one which most closely followed the German geopolitical school was the Chilean army. A good example of this influence is a book by Augusto Pinochet, written in 1968 when Pinochet was a colonel and a professor of geopolitics at the War Academy of the Army.⁷¹

Pinochet defends geopolitik from attack by those who claim that it was created as a Nazi propaganda instrument. Denying this, he argues that geopolitik is a true science and of great importance for the study of the State. In general, in accepting German geopolitics, Pinochet does not share its bellicose vision of other nation-states. He believes that wars are inevitable; and that all attempts at putting war aside have failed. But to acknowledge this does not mean legitimizing force as the unique instrument in relations between states. Great-power politics is condemned: "This solution to the problem [territorial expansion by means of war] is that which almost invariably has been adopted by powerful nations; it is profoundly amoral and contrary to the most basic elements of international law. However, it has been fortified in Germany by Kjellen . . . [and in the U.S. by Spykman] who sustains that for the United States to confront the entire world, it should appeal to the utilization of resources outside of its boundaries, especially pertaining to the South American nations. Such cynicism evidences an absolute lack of respect for the sovereignty of the affected nations."⁷²

On the other hand, Pinochet's adherence to the organic concept of the State present in the geopolitik of the German school admits no restrictions. "The basic idea which serves as a point of departure [in Pinochet's book, Geopolítica] was the principal concept of study of this discipline; the State under the

organic conception, considered as a supra-person and as the highest form of social evolution."⁷³ "Beginning with this century [the eighteenth] it was considered as an unconscious and necessary process of human nature, to place the State above the whimsy or caprice of the individual. 'The State is an organism, it is the highest personification of life.' This organic concept of the State, considered as a supra-individual, as the highest form of social evolution, is integrally accepted into geopolitik."⁷⁴ In open rejection of the liberal conception, Pinochet says that "in geopolitics the State is not a legalistic creation, but, on the contrary, it is seen as a 'living' organism, subjected to certain laws, and subject to natural influences on a par with any other living organism. Therefore a State experiences the phenomena of birth, growth, and death; it expands, becomes ill, and ages like all beings."⁷⁵ "The State is an organic component. . . . The State organism attains a major importance between social groups by absorbing and dominating inferior societies and individuals, and also through its own personality, necessities, ambitions, hatreds, sympathies, norms of conduct and particular sensibility. . . . Geopolitik seeks to give a reasoned and scientific explanation of the life of these supra-beings which on earth are tirelessly active, being born, developing, and dying, a cycle in which they evidence appetites of the most diverse nature and a great instinct for conservation. They are beings as rational and sensible as man."⁷⁶

Conceived as a biological organism, the State is the subject of geopolitik. Geopolitik does not belong to geographic sciences but to the political sciences. It thus differs clearly from political geography, which "considers the State as a static organism." Geopolitics "embraces the growth, change, evolution, and dynamics of terrestrial space and of the political forces which struggle among themselves for survival."⁷⁷ Due to the enormous amplitude of its subject, geopolitik requires the help of many disciplines, and it should be based on "geographic, historic, sociological, economic, strategic, and political knowledge, past and present. . . ."⁷⁸ But the relation between geopolitik and political science is not always clear. Constantly, geopolitics is defined as a branch of political science; however, at times, the latter is seen as little more than an element which nurtures geopolitik: "whoever undertakes the analysis of this science [geopolitics] should have profound and previous knowledge of political science. . . . Political science contributes its knowledge to geopolitics which uses it for analyzing the State."⁷⁹

Here, geopolitik, just as in the extreme versions of the German school, is the science of the State. But in this version, on the other hand, the objective of the State is neither annexation nor conquest of the territory of other nations. Geopolitik is a science of war and peace. Geopolitik, "with its studies, determines the political objectives which should be attained by the State, and advises the leadership which would be the most effective means to obtain those ends."⁸⁰ It has become "a discipline of the political leader, who makes use of it in determining political objectives. . . .

[It] scientifically points out the objectives of the State and the ways of achieving them in the future, in order that they bring peace, bliss, and well-being to the country."⁸¹

Geopolitik is "scientific" management of the State. It is the "science" for solving political problems. Evidently, its technical solutions make it impossible to consider democracy or voting procedures as means of determining and attaining the objectives of the State. In the face of a leader wielding this type of power, it only remains for the people to obey and accept the sacrifices which, in the name of geopolitical science, are imposed upon them.

Consistent with this "scientific" idea of the management of public matters is Pinochet's definition of national power: "National power is a social factor capable of influencing sentiment, thought, and the will of the masses. . . ."⁸² National power is the capacity of the State for organizing social life, in the broadest sense, with views of achieving the greatest fulfillment of the objectives of the State. "'Power' means the organization of the population with an end to exerting domination toward territory and the human masses situated within the boundaries of the State, in order to put into practice, in an essentially dynamic way, the will of the State."⁸³ "The internal power of the State gives it the capability necessary for adopting the political form which it perceives as most convenient for the direction, conduct, and organization of the integrated human masses of the State."⁸⁴

Thus, the population is here a mere instrument or resource at the service of the power of the State: "human masses." The ideal political organization is that which best permits managing and conducting this mass of humanity.

Geopolitik in the Argentine Army. In order to analyze Argentine geopolitical thought we must make a brief reference to rising tendencies within the army, to its struggles, and to the changing influence of geopolitics and the organic conception of the State within the officer corps.

As a consequence of the process of "Prussianification" initiated by the Argentine military in 1898, German military thought had great importance in the formation of the officer corps. It has been noted that the most illustrative example of this influence is General Jose Uriburu, who was perhaps the most "Prussian" of Argentine military officers. Between 1907 and 1913, Uriburu was Director of the War Academy, and in 1930 he became leader of the coup d'etat which overthrew Irigoyen, putting to an end the long process of Argentine constitutionalism. Uriburu had a profound contempt for liberal democracy, and formed part of a group of officers "who were attracted by the idea of institutional reform in which the democratic principles embodied in the Constitution and the election laws would be replaced by the concepts of order and hierarchy."⁸⁵

Like Perón later, Uriburu has been credited with forming an army faction of extreme nationalistic tendencies--defined in one study as "integral nationalism," in opposition to another labelled "liberal nationalism"--a faction which "rejected sympathy for and cooperation with other nations, promoted jingoism, militarism, and imperialism, and opposed all liberties when they interfered with the aims of the state,"⁸⁶ and which favored "the authoritarian state and military rule over the constitutional forms and personal liberties of western democracy; economic nationalism and protectionism; and sometimes expansionism."⁸⁷

The influence of German military thought on this faction is undoubtable. Potash, in his work on the history of the Argentine army, has described the intellectual climate of the 1930s and 1940s as reflected in articles in the principal military publications, writings which recall the Germany military thought described earlier. "A favorite theme of these articles was the great destiny that awaited Argentina and the need for the nation to prepare for an important future international role." That preparation would require "the intensification of patriotic sentiment through the repudiation of utopian, internationalist, pacifist, and exotic ideas. . . ." "At times the military and industrial buildup was rationalized on the grounds that Argentina was engaged in a struggle for existence. . . . The tone of these articles, if not the specific recommendations, was certainly expansionist and reflected the geopolitical arguments used by apologists for Italy and Germany." "With reference to bordering countries he specifically claimed the right for the military to say 'With this neighbor we ought to be friends or allies; with this other it does not matter whether we are. . . .'"⁸⁸

We find a good example of German influence in a book published in 1938 by Colonel Juan Lucio Cernadas, professor at the Escuela Superior de Guerra. Cernadas completely shares the organic vision of the State, adding that the biologic-state organism is in constant struggle for its survival. The state is inspired by "that indomitable will to live which is instinctive, previous, and fundamental to all other consideration and, in this an unrelenting biological struggle. . . ."⁸⁹ War is thus considered inevitable, proved by the fact that no humanitarian crusade has been able to put an end to it. But inasmuch as it helps in the selection of the strongest, war fulfills a valuable function.

As a continuation of this thought we find in the 1940s a resurgence of geopolitical thinking in Argentine military literature. "Argentina's geopolitical thinkers in the 1930's and 1940's," Lt. Col. John Child tells us, "closely followed the ideas of Karl Haushofer and his disciples."⁹⁰ This development is interesting, since the military defeat of Germany seems to have had no major effect on the Argentine military leaders' confidence in the science of Haushofer. Two books written by Argentine army officers are highly illustrative in this sense: one written by First Lieutenants Jasson and Perlinger⁹¹ and published in 1948; the other by First Lieutenants Isola and Berra,⁹² published two years later. Both are elementary

works, which have value only in the ideas they reflect. The former, in particular, contains nothing but apologetic presentations on the thought of Haushofer.

This is not the place to expound upon the Perón regime. We need only say that it was an expression of a type of nationalism strongly related to pre-World War II German military thought. However--and this is its originality--"justicialismo" went much further. But in its roots was a vision of politics, society, and the State which drew upon concepts and disciplines which were predominantly military. The ideology of Peronismo has been defined as "the enemy of liberalism by virtue of the individual concept in . . . its system of ideas, and of socialism by the notion of class which contradicts the organic idea of modern nationalism. Corporate syndicalism opposes class syndicalism. . . . National dictatorship opposes dictatorship of the proletariat and identifies the State not only with the nation, but also with the Peronist movement to all of them one supreme doctrine and a unique and supreme leader. Its concept of State is expressed in terms of will to power, which call for unity of action and thought and coordination of efforts. Peronism constitutes a centralized government and an organized state with expansive ends, of a totalitarian nature."⁹³ This doctrine is attractive to the military mind because of its concern for national unity, which coincides with a conservative organic approach to the State.

The fall of Perón, in 1955, was to have a profound effect on the ideological evolution of Argentine military men. It is true that the victory of the anti-Peronists did not sanctify a new doctrinary orthodoxy, but it did at least sanction an excommunication; the banners of the victors were those of liberalism in opposition to integral nationalistic tendencies. The critique of liberalism and the maintenance of organic and corporativist visions of society and the State came to be considered offenses against the apoliticism which is at the core of military professionalism. In economics, state interventionism gave way to the ideology of free enterprise. And, of course, the quoting of thinkers associated with Nazism and Fascism, such as Haushofer, was thought--at least for a time--to be a rash act which could well lead to the end of a professional career.

Nonetheless, this surge of liberalism would be fleeting. The early 1960s brought to the surface a new split within the Argentine army, between the "azules" and the "colorados." The "azules" eventually triumphed.

Understanding the "azules" and their position toward politics and the State was a difficult problem for the Argentines. In 1963, the "azules" imposed presidential elections and returned the military to its quarters. Conversely, in 1966, the armed forces, again led by "the azules," overthrew a democratic president and thereupon constituted the "most rotund and complete militaristic experience in the contemporary history of Argentina."⁹⁴

How was it that the legitimizers (legalistas) of 1963 became the deponents (golpistas) of 1966? One analysis of the "azules" and "colorados" indicates that the "colorados . . . regard the Azules,

those cavalrymen from the Interior, as Nationalists, as the Azules regard themselves. Many Colorados go further and think of the Azules as authoritarians with pro-Spanish or Nazi leanings. Many, indeed, are pro-Franco. The Azules think of the Colorados as 'cosmopolitans,' especially open to British influence."⁹⁵ The triumph of the "azules" was thus only in appearance one of legalists, and in no sense one of liberals. In reality its significance was very different.

During the struggles which continued after the fall of Perón, the army became progressively more disunited. Civilians' quarrels penetrated the army, threatening its discipline and organization. In 1962-63, when the "azules" forced a return to the barracks, they were not seeking the respect of the liberal regime but were organically reconstructing the army and seeking to unite it under one doctrine.

"The conflict between the Azules and Colorados permitted elaboration of ideas and concepts which later would serve for revising the classic military doctrine. . . . The army regrouped itself and, separated from all political function in silence, meditated on its own experiences and on the international situation and continued working out its doctrine."⁹⁶ This effort toward aligning the army around a new and unique doctrine meant definitively opening the door to a return of old nationalistic concepts and, moreover, to the adoption of French counter-subversive theory.

With respect to geopolitik, the triumph of the "azules" and the search for a new doctrine which they initiated within the army meant restitution of the value of the discipline which in the time of "de-Peronization" was called "Nazi science." Expressive of this development are books of Colonel Jorge Atencio in 1965 and Colonel Justo Briano in 1966, the works of General Osiris Villegas, articles by General Juan Guglielmelli in the journal *Estrategia*, rediscovery of the works of Dr. De Labougle, a geopolitician of the first Perón period, and many more too long to list.

These works give tremendous validity to geopolitics as a science for the management of the State. It seems to us that these efforts by military men to consider geopolitics as a science of the state reflect an attempt at self-affirmation and the need to believe that the field of military thought contains the elements required for rational and technical management of the State, over and above the party quarrels which divide the civil elites and which the armed forces hope will not divide themselves.

Geopolitik in the Brazilian Army. The Brazilian army, in contrast to the armies of Chile and Argentina, was tied not to German military missions but to French military missions. This was an important factor in the attitude of the armed forces prior to the Second World War. Differing particularly from the Argentines, Brazilian military men expressed solidarity not toward Germany but toward the Allies. Brazil was the only South American nation which participated militarily in the conflict against the Axis, sending an expeditionary force which fought in Italy.

Nevertheless, immediately after World War II, Brazilian military officers began to defend the German school of geopolitics from the accusation that it was "a science of the Nazis." They began to accept essential elements of the thought of Ratzel, Kjellen, and Haushofer--such as, for example, the organic conception of the State, and especially the role of geopolitics as a political science. In this respect, it is worthwhile to cite the works of General Everardo Backheuser and Brigadier Lisias Rodriguez, published in the 1940s.

Although numerous Brazilian military professionals have written about geopolitik, we will refer only to General Golbery do Couto e Silva, who since 1964 has been political advisor to every Chief of State of the Brazilian military regime. Golbery is Brazil's most important and influential military writer.

War is the starting point of Golbery's most important work, Geopolítica do Brasil. War is interpreted and resolved by the categories of geopolitics. Fundamental concepts of a mode of thought and a concrete political project emerge from this foundation.

The Brazilian nation is in a security crisis, but that crisis is part of a trend in Western-Christian civilization, all of which is threatened. "Modern political ideologies," Golbery says, "threatened everywhere the decadent world of impotent, exhausted liberalism."⁹⁷ This development is dramatic, for no challenge has been greater. Mankind is immersed in a situation of extreme insecurity which affects "men of all attitudes and races [war is worldwide], men of all ages [war is permanent], men of all professions and of diverse creeds [war is total]. . . ."⁹⁸

Ludendorff's theories have been overcome, as the concept of total war has been extended to cover not only what Ludendorff saw, but also "the total extent of world space, taking place in all nations and invading all continents, all oceans and all skies . . . but above all, extending itself through time, incorporating war itself, to pre-war and post-war as simple diminished manifestations of its enslaving dynamism--masked forms of war but war nonetheless." His vision is apocalyptic: "This war is more than mere war; it is also economic war, political war, psychological war, ideological war; civil wars as revolutions are also wars; war can be cold war and, as such, permanent, insidious, multi-faced. What then could be peace?"⁹⁹

It is in this way that the most vital activities of a nation--its economy, education and culture, internal order, external relations--come to be considered as the several fronts of a total war. In this way, politics itself ultimately is part of a strategy or, better yet, is an action which should be thought of in terms of strategy and military tactics. Stated differently, such theories signify a militarization of political thought, in which politics begins to become oriented toward objectives and means which are proper in war. The conflicts which exist in every society are reduced by comparison to warlike conflict, and relations between political and social groups are defined in terms of a unique dialectic of friends and enemies.

Strictly speaking, this is nothing but the result of having questioned and overcome the Clausewitzian distinction between war and politics. Ludendorff had already stated that "all the theories of Clausewitz should be thrown overboard. Both warfare and politics are meant to serve the preservation of the people, but warfare is the highest expression of the national 'will to survive,' and politics must, therefore, be subservient to the conduct of war."¹⁰⁰ But Golbery tells us that war in our era is more total than that which Ludendorff described: "Strategy is no longer solely an art of generals, there also exist economic strategy, political strategy, psychosocial strategy; there already exist a strategy and a tactic of subversive action of which Lenin was the undisputed master; the economists in their planning make an effort at every step to distinguish between strategic and non-strategic variables; the games of strategy open a revolutionary chapter in mathematical analysis; and strategy can be as much a strategy of peace as a strategy of war. What remains, therefore, for politics?"¹⁰¹

Conclusion

We now return to a point made at the beginning of this paper--the idea that from a given concept of war, it is possible to infer, if not a structural concept of the State and the political system, at least a set of fundamental ideas sufficient to determine the particular kind of political behavior of military men and the general orientation of their political compromises, alliances, and exclusions. (We will discuss this topic only briefly here, in order merely to illustrate our point of view. A more detailed presentation of our ideas on this matter is beyond the scope of the present paper.)

Both concepts dealt with above, anti-communist war and geopolitics, lead to a militarization of political thought. In other words, they lead to a perception of the essential activities of a country as different fronts of a total war, and to a perception of politics as an action thought of in terms of military strategy and tactics. Politics becomes oriented toward objectives and means characteristic of war, ever-existing social conflicts are by analogy reduced to belligerent ones; and the relationship between groups, political or social, is defined in terms of a unique dialectic of friends and enemies.

Essentially, both anti-communist war and geopolitics point to a categorical rejection of liberalism. The arguments derived from the two concepts are different but mutually complementary at the same time. According to counter-subversive theory, liberalism is hopelessly defeated under communism. The military think that the appeal of communist ideology is contained in its vision of the world, offering answers (albeit false ones) to man's principal problems. The communists, no matter how mistaken, fanatic, or immoral in their methods, are men encouraged by faith, by a belief in something. Because of this, the communists can be great combatants, relentless soldiers for their cause.

Liberalism, on the other hand, is considered by the military as having produced a society of skeptical men, without ideals. Liberal democracy, then, is a weak regime, spiritually sick, incapable of winning this war, the objective of which is man's heart and conscience. Liberalism's spiritual weakness runs parallel to the absolute incapacity of its legal institutions to face the new type of war being waged by communism. If it is true that in the United States, "in order to counter the claims of communist ideology it has become obsolete to disparage the symbols of democracy, even in the military establishment," the situation is exactly the opposite in the armies of the South Cone. There, the supporters of counter-subversive doctrine state, with regret, that a democratic regime leads to communism.

Thus, in this concept, armies must be committed to a two-front war: against communism, but also against liberalism which paves the way for communism. The political consequences of this counter-subversive concept spread into several different fields, with important consequences for the relationship between the military and the State, and for the definition of the role of the military in society.

First, and not the least important, the counter-subversive concept gives origin to a substantial change in the traditional military ethic. An increasing number of statements and writings by the military assert that counter-subversive war cannot be waged within the framework of the law or under the ethical rules applicable to conventional war. As a result, legitimation, or at least a permissive attitude, soon gives way to torture and other crimes or abuses against the civilian population and those detained for subversive attitudes.

Regarding the institutional structure of the State, the counter-subversive conception tends to justify the indefinite prolongation of a state of emergency, state of siege, or whatever it may be called. Since communism is a permanent aggression, war is omnipresent, and therefore the law gives the government and the army exceptional faculties to fight this particular war. Thus, from a certain conception of war, certain forms of the State are inferred which are contradictory or definitely opposed to the liberal conception.

The contribution of geopolitics to the political concepts of the militaries of the Southern Cone is equally remarkable. As we have said, the geopolitical thought of the military in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile follows the line of the German geopolitical school. Consequently, they accept--with very rare exceptions--an organic conception of the State. In the second place, they believe that the State is engaged in a permanent struggle for survival. Moreover, they conceive of geopolitics as a political science, or better, as the science of the State.

The organic conception is associated with politics which emphasize the rights of the State--as a being, provided with national

objectives and moral goals--and not the rights of individuals. Therefore, the organic vision of the State leads to authoritarian politics which in some cases end in a categorical rejection of liberal democracy. The State has its own goals, born out of race, history, and geography--goals which cannot keep changing according to the fickleness of universal suffrage.

From another point of view, the organic conception of the State rejects the Marxist conception of class struggle as well as the extreme pluralism to which--it says--liberalism leads. Both liberalism and Marxism are ideologies that destroy the sense of national unity which lies at the core of the organic conception of the State.

In its struggle for survival, the most important need of the State is power. As has been pointed out, geopolitics rejects the juridical conception of the State. The State is not a juridical order. It is much more than that. It is power. The objective of politics is the expansion of the power of the State.

Up to this point in the conceptual analysis, South American geopoliticians follow the German school, but beyond it they dissent. In the German context, the struggle for power was equivalent to the struggle for the expansion of territorial frontiers by means of conquest or settlement. The fight for power was a fight for vital space. The South American context is very different. There we are faced with an empty continent. The problem is not the conquest of new territories, but the exploitation of existing ones, their development by means of the best use of human and natural resources.

In South America, the development of State power is directed not outward but inward, inside existing national territory. The growth of national power is carried out not through a war of conquest, but through a war "for security and development." Such is the starting point of a militaristic vision of politics.

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