DISAPPEARING OR BEING MADE TO DISAPPEAR? RECONTEXTUALIZING THE SELF-DETERMINATION PRINCIPLE THROUGH THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

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Despite the predictions of the decline in power of national states, the changing notion of sovereignty, and the idea that nations and nationalism have already accomplished their historical role, demands for self-determination are not disappearing. Rather, in the wake of the Cold War and the era of globalization and reflexive (or post-) modernization, they are being made to disappear. Using the Chechen and Palestinian cases as examples, we demonstrate how the global war on terror served as a means for re-contextualization of national aspirations and demands for self-determination by presenting them as 'acts of terror' that endangered the entire civilized world. The paper details the construction of this discourse and its institutionalization through the relations between the USA and its allies, Russia and Israel, until it impeded the possibility for peace on the basis of self-determination realization.

Keywords: *global war on terror, war and peace, self-determination, nation and nationalism, nation-states, globalization.*

> History will know that day not only as a day of tragedy, but as a day of decision… a mighty coalition of civilized nations is now defending our common Security.
>
> George W. Bush (2002)

In August 2000, a 'historic event', as its members called it, entitled 'The First International Conference on the Right to Self-Determination' was held in Geneva. Among the participants were the UN experts, representatives of many nationalities, minority members of various parliaments, local and global NGOs activists, and many scholars. The participants expressed their concerns about the increasing violations of individual and collective human rights. Many of them also identified with what the distinguished Harvard Professor Richard Falk described as the 'continuous frustration to millions of peoples, who suffer from the denial of the self-determination principle out of a variety of statist and geopolitical causes' (Kly and Kly 2000: 4).

The proclaimed goal of the conference was to promote the recognition of a universal right to self-determination within the framework of modern international law, in particular in the UN, and to work closely with the UN Commission on Human Rights and the sub-commission on the protection of minorities. In the keynote address, Dr. Hans Koechler, the President of the International Progress Organization, an NGO that deals with human rights and works closely with the UN, talked about the obstacles to the exercise of the right of self-determination in the legal framework of the UN,

which is still based on the concept of the nation-state. He and other speakers called for 'a peoples – not state-centered international system', and for a new paradigm that will do away, as they phrased it, 'with the *étatist* concept of exclusive state sovereignty'.[1] In the world of 200 countries and 5,000 ethnically, linguistically, religiously, or culturally homogenous identity groups, a demand for self-determination in the wake of the Cold War was almost self-evident. What were the chances of its success?

Within a year, however, global war broke out. Throughout modern history, wars and self-determination have gone hand in hand. World wars in particular had a tremendous influence on claims of self-determination, and the Global War on Terror (hereafter: GWT) was a kind of Third World War. How did this war influence the new national demands? Did it advance them or impede them? This paper addresses this question.

Answering it, however, is not an easy task, and it is doubtful whether international law can help much. As Lapidoth (1997: 19) noted: 'The right to self-determination has been one of the most intriguing and enigmatic notions of modern international law'. Indeed, the law on these issues is deliberately vague, inadequate, too general, ahistoric, problematic and even biased, for example, in its observation of 'normal' and 'abnormal' cases. Moreover, it reflects mainly the formal relationships between the international society of states and the priorities states enjoy vis-à-vis non-states in world politics (Koskenniemi 1994: 254; Cassese 1995; Falk 2002). Given that international law contains little that is helpful, we need an appropriate theoretical tool and an empirical examination of particular cases at specific times and in specific places in order to understand the dynamics that leads to the approval or denial of self-determination.

Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and National Aspiration

The idea that nations are entitled to self-determination with no external compulsion or interference was substantiated in the last half of the eighteenth century through the American and French Revolutions. With the end of the First World War and the dissolution of the Hapsburg, Hohenzollern, Romanov and Ottoman empires, self-determination became a key principle in the world politics. A milestone in the history of the concept was the words of the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in his famous speech on self-determination on February 11, 1918, saying: 'National aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase; it is an imperative principle of action'.[2]

The implementation of the idea, however, was not self-evident. Even President Wilson's idea that national claims to statehood would be decided by plebiscite could not be translated so easily into practicalities, as it was often debatable who the 'people' were and how they could vote (Mayall 1999: 47). The problems were not technical, of course. After all, any claim for national self-determination almost always came into conflict with the older and more respected international principle of state sovereignty and territorial integrity that had existed at least since the days of Westphalia. The clashes between the two principles could and often did lead to turmoil and war that many times solved nothing. Take, for example, the case of Kurdish nationalism. The Kurds are an ancient people by all objective and subjective criteria, whose national aspirations were ignored after the First World War when their territory was divided among Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Ever since, all of these states have argued against any idea of an independent Kurdish state (Marcus 2007).

Of course, there is another side of the coin. After all, many new national states appeared right after the First and the Second World Wars and in the years that followed. Nevertheless, it was often power politics and coercion, not values and morals that determined who the lucky winners were (and why Kurdistan, Corsica and Tibet were not 'in the list'). Decolonizing Asia and Africa in the 1960s marked a huge step in the history of self-determination. However, even this step left intact the old, arbitrary colonial borders, which did not reflect national, ethnic, or religious sentiments. This problem has condemned Africa to turmoil and wars ever since. In addition, realizing national aspirations did not always result in the promises behind the original idea of self-determination: civil rights, minority rights, liberty and democracy (Cassese 1995; Freeman 1999).

Then came the downfall of the Soviet Union. In the new global order that was defined as neoliberal, unipolar, and post (or late or reflexive) modern, many believed that concepts such as sovereignty, self-determination, nation and nationalism, and even the nation-state itself, were losing their appeal, perhaps together with history itself.[3] Indeed, the national state and its legitimacy were under attacks from both the 'inside' and 'outside'. On the 'inside', various ethnic or religious communities questioned whether the state was the representative of everybody (Young 1993). On the 'outside', new global forms of power, new forms of governance, and abundance of global NGOs reflected the idea that the nation-state had become just one actor among many on the world's stage (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992; Risse *et al.* 1999).

Self-determination issues were related as well to a stormy controversy about nation and nationalism. Modernist scholars claimed that national sentiments and ethno-national solidarities arose in the past under modern, mainly industrial and technological conditions, out of political necessity to mobilize people to realize the goals of the state or the elite. This need, the modernists said, was no longer relevant (Hobsbawm 1990: 182). Ethno-symbolists such as Hutchinson (2005) and A. D. Smith (2009) countered that claim arguing that the historical roots of nations date much further back than the modern era (*la long durée*). Therefore, it seems unreasonable to assume that they would suddenly disappear in the face of globalization and reflexive modernization.

Indeed, the ethno-symbolists' contention seems plausible not only given the creation of more than 20 new states with the downfall of the Soviet Union, and the continuous waves of upheavals against national states in the post-Cold War era, but given the fact that most of the dissidents (even the Islamic ones) still express their demands in terms of a homogenous national state for themselves (Koskenniemi 1994).

The ethno-symbolists' writing reminds us that we should not ignore culture and meaning (*e.g.*, national feelings, religious sentiments, *etc.*) when dealing with power politics and that we should not restrict international politics to 'realistic' explanations only. After all, national and religious sentiments (sometimes in the form of a civil religion) appear as an explanatory variable among those who make claims about self-determination and the national states that deny these claims. However, ethno-symbolism, as its adherents always said, is not a theory. Therefore, it cannot give sufficient answer to our question about the influence of the GWT on self-determination. Did the war change the criteria through which self-determination claims are realized or denied?

Usually, most arguments against self-determination tend to deal less with the specific case and more with the entire international system. As de-Shalit (1996) wrote, the international community argues that 'we' cannot afford so many states. The refusal argument is

also based on the premise of the fragility of the world system, and on the threat of destabilizing it completely if the self-determination principle were applied. As UN Secretary Boutrous-Ghali said in 1992, 'If every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve' (Boutrous-Ghali 1993: 468–498). The desire to protect the existing state sovereignty and territorial integrity is, of course, behind such reasoning. After all, if the fear of war were the issue, the refusal to grant self-determination has often increased the chances of war and even led sometimes to genocide. Moral reasoning is also mentioned as a reason for denying self-determination. Proponents of this argument maintain that correcting one injustice through the principle of self-determination might cause another, or even many, injustices, and make other minorities in multi-ethnic states feel insecure (Shehadi 1993: 7). Needless to say, such an apologetic argument does not solve any of the problems that the First International Conference for Self-Determination raised: problems of discrimination, human rights violations, and the denial of the right of nations to self-determination. However, recently, there have new arguments for denying the right to self-determination that merit our attention.

We contend that global social and cultural changes have added a new basis on which to deny various peoples the right of self-determination. If the 9/11 attack was directed against neoliberal, post-Cold War America, if it exposed, at least symbolically, a crisis in the legitimacy of the national state and the modern ethos that stood for hundreds of years at its center, one of the purposes of the GWT was to re-strengthen nation-states and help them regain their status and power in the world. This notion accords with the argument of the ethno-symbolists that the national state is not disappearing anytime soon. However, our analysis goes further than that. We maintain that the GWT created an environment (real or imagined) of 'national (in)security' in which national aspirations and demands for self-determination were delegitimized and denied on a basis, which fetishized terrorism and placed it at the center of the international political map.

There is no doubt that terrorism and terrorist acts against the USA and other states played the leading role in the causes, occurrences, and consequences of the GWT. In addition, there is no doubt that both the Chechens and the Palestinians used terrorist methods in their struggle for independence, regardless of how we define the term 'terror' (on the various definitions, see Crenshaw 2011). However, it is the proximity that was created and institutionalized in this war between 'the danger of terror' on one hand, and the negative attitude towards national aspirations for self-determination on the other, that interests us here.

In order to understand this proximity, we borrow Bernstein's (1996) definition of recontextualization as a representation of social events. Recontextualization is a process through which one social event or a practice is represented through and within the context of another social event. It is, as Fairclough (2003: 139–140) wrote, an incorporation of elements from one social practice or context into another. Indeed, our claim is that aspirations for self-determination recontextualized in the GWT. They were evaluated, explained, framed or delegitimized in a different way than before.

We use a constructivist-institutional approach in order to capture the full meaning of the recontextualization process. The constructivist-institutional approach takes into

consideration the subjective perceptions of reality, which appear in the form of values, beliefs, norms, collective identities, and forms of discourse that are formed and institutionalized to become part of the 'nature of things' for political actors (March and Olsen 1989; Finnemore and Sikkink 2002).

Following the constructivist-institutional approach, we demonstrate how some 'assumptions' about self-determination that were constructed in and through the GWT were institutionalized and became part of the global cultural rule that influenced national claims. In fact, we try to trace the political process that led to the proximity between the 'global war on terror' and claims of self-determination by examining two national movements, the Chechens and the Palestinians. These examples are important because both national movements almost succeeded in realizing their aspirations and claims in the post-Cold War era.

Between the time that the Soviet Union collapsed and a relatively stable Russian government emerged two years later, Chechnya had attained de-facto independence (Gall and De Wall 1997; Dunlop 1998). Moreover, following the First Chechen War (1994–1996), the Khasav-Yurt Accord, and later on, the Yeltsin-Maskhadov agreement in mid-November 1996, paved the way to demilitarization, to the withdrawal of the Russian army from Grozny, and again to the de-facto independence of Chechnya (Lapidus 1998). As for the Palestinians, all UN institutions and most national states (including those called 'Israel's friends') define the territories that were seized by Israel in the 1967 War as occupied territories that are held under military regime and should be given back to their inhabitants, a process which already started with the 1993 Oslo Accords (Cassese 1995: 230–247). If self-determination were dependent on some objective criteria and not on cultural and political rules, the Chechens and the Palestinians would undoubtedly accomplish their goals. However, the discourse that developed in the wake of the GWT has made their cases more difficult to argue.

The term 'discourse' plays a key role in this argument. Discourse reflects a practical and usable translation of a belief into a common generalized outlook that becomes part of everyday life and has an influence by 'permitting' certain behaviors and 'prohibiting' others.[4] Analyzing a discourse has another benefit in that it can be accessed for research purposes. Discourse is made up of verbal and written texts created by various participants in venues such as leadership meetings, parliamentary debates, and newspaper articles that are easy to monitor (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Written texts, however, are insufficient for understanding a discourse, unless we take into consideration their accompanying practices and social processes. After all, as Van Dijk (1997: 2) wrote, discourses are not abstract structures, as researchers in linguistics assume; they are, in fact, language in action.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the American response to the 9/11 events, which included the construction of a national and, no less important, international GWT discourse that sought to legitimize all wars against all terrorists and 'invited' all national states to be involved in the construction of the GWT discourse. The second section demonstrates how Russia succeeded in enlarging the boundaries of the GWT discourse so that the Chechen national resistance in the early 2000s was delegitimized and was presented as part of the global 'terrorist acts'. The last section demonstrates how Israel convinced the USA and its allies that the Intifada, the Palestinian national resistance, which began in late September 2000 and lasted

for several years, was as well an act of terror, part of the global terrorism that threatened the entire world. As in the Russian case, in the Israeli case as well the new discourse that presented national aspirations as terrorism reduced the chances for talks, even with the most moderate among these nationalists, talks that could lead to a compromise, an agreement and even to peace.

'History has Taken a Different Turn'

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, and the outburst of collective solidarity and patriotism that flooded the USA, it seemed that whatever steps the President adopted, America would follow him. American Presidents always present their foreign policy as the one based not only on interests, but also on values and ideals, and Bush was no exception. He quickly made clear that America does not have to protect only itself, but must also bring about global peace (McCartney 2004; Jervis 2005; Croft 2006). It was indeed an idealistic, Wilsonian vision, but a vision with arms and vengeance (Zakaria 2002). In order to justify such a combination, Al Qaeda was portrayed as an organization that followed in the path 'of the murderous ideologies of the twentieth century... fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism' (Bush 2003). Bin Laden was probably not a new Hitler, but the idea, as Jackson (2005: 24) wrote, 'was to demonize and dehumanize the enemies to such an extent that any counter violence towards them appears acceptable and proportional'.

Another purpose that the dichotomous presentation of 'us' versus 'them' served was to present the world in terms of the separation between the 'civilized core' versus the 'barbaric' or 'dangerous periphery' (Dalby 2007). This observation, with its resemblance to Huntington's 'clash of civilizations', was undoubtedly part of the attempt to reconstruct the US national pride that was shaken through the horrific and unexpected event, but it served also as a call to the world to join the cultural war of the civilized against the barbaric.

The Bush administration developed what some scholars called an imperial image of reality (Bacevich 2002; Dalby 2003; Rhodes 2003). After all, did not Bush say, 'History has taken a different turn'?[5] There were several components of this perception of reality. First, the USA chose to react through a comprehensive war. It had other options, for example, to try to find those who were directly behind the attack, or to target only al Qaeda or even just the Afghan regime. Alternately, it could have treated the attack as a criminal act, not a security issue. But the US Administration chose the path of an everlasting war. 'An effort of many years', as Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, promised and a war to be fought, as Bush promised, on a variety of fronts and in different ways.[6]

Choosing the path of such war, and turning it immediately into a global war undoubtedly called for allies, especially, as the Administration noted, the enemy was everywhere. The al Qaeda organization and its leader, as Bush said, 'are linked to many other organizations in different countries… there are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries'. The meaning of that was clear, and Bush gave other national states little choice not to understand that, declaring 'either you're with us or against us' (Bush 2001).[7] The US experts did not believe that terrorists can operate without states' support. Their view was that notwithstanding all the talk about how globalization had changed their power, states remained the primary force in world politics and therefore, they have to be at the center of the struggle against terror (Daalder and Lindsay 2003).

But what exactly was this 'terror'? Terrorism has a clear definition. It is a form of violence that is primarily designed to influence an audience through concealment, surprise, stealth, conspiracy, and deception, which are meant to shock, frighten, excite, or outrage (Crenshaw 2011: 2). The problem, however, derives not from the term's conceptualization but from the political tendency to use the term as a characterization of the 'other' who is morally degraded. Undoubtedly, President Bush was using the term in that way. He refused to restrict it to the 9/11 attacks or to the specific enemy that initiated them, deliberately preferring to use the term in a vague and charged way. Perhaps, Peter Bergen exaggerated by claiming that Bush took the American nation to war against… a tactic (Bergen 2009). But Bush wanted to present the terror menace as an ontological entity, something dark, vague, and threatening, a demon that lurked about destroying innocents. 'Who were these enemies?' asked UCLA sociologist Michael Mann (2003: 5). Bush, he said, did not even mention Osama bin Laden or al Qaeda in the January 2002 State of the Union Address.

Bush promoted an image of the world as a wilderness of anarchy and danger, filled with weak states and new wars that are in desperate need of the help and protection of the only superpower that remained on earth.[8] Such an image allowed the USA to mobilize other national states to its side. However, it opened as well the possibility that other states would take part in the reconstruction of the GWT discourse and in determining its boundaries. The linear view in which the global is taken for granted, and then national states and cultures are transformed by an all-powerful force like America was not so simple. In the following, we present the way both Russia and Israel did not accept a possible definition of the GWT, unless it embedded their 'cases'. In this way they took part, together with the USA, in changing the criteria of self-determination's denial or approval.

'Direct Intervention of International Terror against Russia'[9]

The Chechens are an ancient nation. Their contentious relationship with Russia goes back at least to the eighteenth century. Ethno-national sentiments played a role on both sides in these rivalries. The Russians often expressed a sense of cultural superiority and behaved aggressively towards the 'barbarians' living a tribal way of life and refusing to obey Russian rules (Tishkov 2004; Russell 2005, 2007). As for the Chechens, their hatred to Russia grew in 1944 when the Communist regime exiled half a million Chechens from their region for seemingly no particular reason. In 1956, the exiles returned to their homeland, but the attempts of Russification of the Chechens have never stopped (Gammer 2006).

On November 1, 1991, Dzhokhar Dudayev, an ex-Major General in the Soviet army, announced the Chechen quest for sovereignty and succeeded in unifying most Chechens in supporting him. The Yeltsin administration decided to react militarily, and the First Chechen War began. In 1996, it became clear that the Russian army was defeated, but not before it wreaked devastation everywhere, killing many civilians and destroying Grozny, the Chechen capital (Lieven 1998). Following this war, Chechnya gained *de facto* independence as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, but the new situation did not last long.

For our purposes, the most important and interesting point is the fact that the West firmly objected to the Russian army's operations in Chechnya. In 1995, the U.S. Con-

gress expressed its concern, insisting that 'whereas the US investment in Russia has been significant in promoting democracy and stabilizing the Russian economy… this progress is imperiled and undermined by Russia's continued war with Chechnya'.[10] The Americans brought up Chechnya in the UN Human Rights Commission, which issued a Chairman's Statement on Chechnya in 1995.[11] The Russians came under pressure from the European Union as well, and from many international human rights organizations and NGOs.[12] In those years, the actions of the Chechen militias were not defined as 'terrorist acts'. Instead, the Russian campaign was justified in terms of the 'criminalization of Chechen life' (Jonson 2006: 122).

Vladimir Putin's career, first as prime minister, and then as president, coincided with an aggressive resurgence in the North Caucasus. On August 26, Russia acknowledged bombing raids in Chechnya, forcing 100,000 people to flee from their homes. The Chechen's reaction was soon to come. It began on September 4, 1999 with the apartment block bombings in Moscow and other cities that killed over 300 people. The Russian population was traumatized, and Putin, skillfully constructed a new narrative of 'fundamentalist Islamic terror', and ordered that all Russian news media refer to the Chechen opposition exclusively as 'terrorists'. After a long siege and a ruthless battle, the Russian army took control of the separatist region of Chechnya, including the Chechen capital Grozny, killing tens of thousands of Chechens, most of them civilians, in the so-called 'dirty-war' (*e.g.*, Human Rights Watch 2000, 2001; see also Politkovskaya 2005). The consequences of the new narrative were evident in Putin's rejection of numerous opportunities in the coming years to talk and to reach an agreement even with the most moderate among the Chechen leaders (Russell 2005: 108–110).

USA–Russian relations were relatively cold at this time. In late 1999, President Bill Clinton and UK Foreign Secretary Robin Cook still expressed their concerns about the mounting civilian casualties in Chechnya.[13] Then George Bush was elected President, and he met Putin in Slovenia on June 15, 2001. Journalists called the meeting 'an ice-breaking summit'. Putin and Bush agreed to begin a dialogue and build a new framework for global security and cooperation. Among other things, Putin wanted to get American approval for his actions in Chechnya (Wyatt 2001; D'Anastasio 2001). When the 9/11 attacks came, Putin immediately decided to support the USA in its fight against 'international terrorism'. He was among the first of the world's leaders to speak on the phone with Bush in the aftermath of the attack and express his condolences. He also sent a telegram in which he did not forget to mention: 'We well understand your grief and pain. The Russians have themselves experienced the horror of terror'.[14]

Putin understood the opportunity that 9/11 had created for his efforts to convince the West that Russia was not trying to forcefully deny self-determination to the Chechens. It was the other way around. Russia itself was a victim of terror exactly like the Americans. Putin even told reporters that the bombings of the Moscow apartments carried 'the same signature' as the 9/11 attacks in the USA.[15] The comparison was, of course, problematic. After all, the Russians have had a bloody history of national strife with the Chechens, with atrocities on both sides. Moreover, the Chechens wanted to free themselves from Russian rule and obtain independence, while al Qaeda did not represent any nation, and presented no specific demands to the Americans. However, when the goal is to take part in the construction of a discourse, the facts are less important. To the surprise of many, Putin even declared that Moscow would not oppose America's use of former Soviet

airbases in the central Asian republics that border Afghanistan, a declaration that seemed as if the 'end of days' had arrived.

From 9/11 on, the Russian president and his administration constantly worked to redefine the boundaries of the GWT discourse so that the ethno-national conflict in Chechnya would be part of it.[16] The Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs even claimed that several men from the group that perpetrated the terrorist act of September 11 had been engaged in combat actions on Chechen territory (Safonov 2001). The accusation was false, but the Americans could not but agree with Putin's idea that 'with terrorists you cannot come to terms, you must leave them no peace'. After all, Bush's definition of terrorism was a kind of empty box into which anything could be put. In addition, the Americans were further encouraged by Putin's repeated declarations that the war against terror requires 'united efforts'.

Human rights organizations continued to badger Russia on the Chechnya question. The horror about the Russian war against Chechnya, however, seemed not just a price the allies could afford to pay for Russia's help, but also part of a global front that nation states had forged against non-state 'heresy' or secessionist desires. After all, even Condoleezza Rice said that Americans could not fight against international terrorism in Afghanistan and back it in Chechnya (Safonov 2001).

The warm relations between the two leaders brought Putin to the USA in mid-November.[17] In this meeting, Bush bought the Russian depiction of Chechnya as another locus of Islamic terrorism, even after the Kremlin itself estimated the foreign presence in Chechnya at no more than 700 or 800 fighters. The Chechens themselves denied any such presence, while experts outside of Russia said that no more than 200 or even fewer foreign fighters were in the area. The pint-sized numbers, however, were not regarded as the real issue by anyone.

Putin's attempts to be part of the GWT campaign impressed everyone. In the National Security Strategy of the USA of September 2002, Russia was described as a country 'in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future and a partner in the war on terror'.[18] While these words were being uttered, the Russian army continued using 'dirty war' tactics, while the international society of states remained most of the time silent.[19] A BBC reporter who visited the Bela refugee camp, one of five camps near Nazran that were populated with refugees from Chechnya, related, 'Those who fled the fighting in Chechnya and have taken shelter here feel that their plight has been completely forgotten by the outside world'. And one woman said: 'President Bush has betrayed the Chechen people. All we want is for Russian troops to leave our land so that we can return home and live in peace' (Rosenberg 2001).

When Secretary of State Colin Powell gave an interview to *Izvestia* on December 18, 2002, he was asked about the US position on human rights in Chechnya. His answer was typical. On the one hand, he said that the international community had recognized the legal right of Russia to defend its territory; on the other hand, he mentioned Russia's need to respect its international obligations in defending the rights of the populace in Chechnya.[20] On no occasion did Powell express support for the Chechen desire for self-determination. On the contrary, while visiting the Pratica Di Mare Air Force Base in Rome, following the recent Moscow summit, and while Russian forces abducted and murdered Chechens daily and made thousands of citizens homeless, Powell

announced that 'Russia is fighting terrorists in Chechnya, there is no question about that, and we understand that'.[21]

When the Chechens took the battle into the heart of Moscow by seizing the Dubrovka Theatre, which was packed with spectators, the videotaped message issued by the separatist Movsar Barayev left no doubt as to the motives behind the event: 'Every nation has the right to their destiny', he said. 'Russia has taken this away from the Chechens… The Russian occupiers have flooded our land with our children's blood… therefore, we have chosen this approach' (taken from Saunders 2008). Putin interpreted the event differently, and quickly asserted that the siege of the theater had been planned in 'foreign terrorist centers' (Buckley 2003: 227; Buckley and Singh 2006).

Many questioned Putin's steps that brought about the death of 21 gunmen and 130 hostages by the Federal Security Service commandos. President Bush, however, backed Putin completely, saying, 'A national leader must act firmly when terrorists kill civilians, and the terrorists threatened to kill 800 people… It is the terrorists who must pay for what they have done'. In the new global era, Bush felt the need to rehabilitate the strength of national states. No wonder he also mentioned that the Chechen issue was Russia's internal affair, while his administration added three groups led by Basayev to the list of terrorist organizations (Bryant 2002).

The Russians' behavior in Chechnya was much more than a direct, unadulterated response to terrorism. Like the Americans, the Russians adopted the vague manner of isolating the concept of 'terror' and demonizing it. 'We are facing a form of terrorism', said the Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov on July 13, 2004, 'which is not politically motivated but driven by fanatical extremism and the animal instinct to kill'.[22] This was a metaphor that the 'Russians appropriated from Bush's idea of smoking the terrorists out of their holes' (Bush's words, see in U.S. Department of State 2001–2003). Like Bush, Putin talked about the danger of terrorism 'undermin(ing) the very foundations of our civilization' (Putin 2004). He knew that many in Washington would be satisfied by the fact that he borrowed Huntington's idea of a war between civilizations. Indeed, both Bush and Putin understood the associative power of words. Sometimes they have to be overstated and vague, sometimes direct, sharp and even blunt, but in any case, and especially when they form a specific discourse, they mobilize people for the purpose of war and justify various political and military acts.

The summer of 2004 was terrible for Russia, with the horrors of the Beslan massacre, in which Ingush and Chechen rebels killed hundreds of children in the small town's school (Glasser and Baker 2004). During the terrorist event, the Putin administration claimed, as usual, that up to 10 of the 20 hostage takers killed in the school siege were Arab militants. Russian security sources also claimed that al Qaeda financed the seizure of the school but this was not true (Lynch 2005). Unlike al Qaeda's attacks on 9/11, the Beslan hostage takers made demands. On the second day they even released 26 hostages, showing that negotiations were not entirely futile. However, Putin did not even consider talking with the 'criminals', or the 'bandits', and the Americans approved his policy without reservation.

Summing up, institutionalization occurs when actors interact and come to accept shared definitions of reality (Nelson, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004). Even though Russia and the USA had different perspectives on and expectations of the GWT, they jointly constructed a discourse that was based on expanding the normative boundaries of

the GWT in a way that legitimized the suppression of ethno-national groups and nations under the title of a war against terror. Denying self-determination aspiration was not perhaps popular in the post-Cold War era. Defining such aspirations as 'terror' was the solution for that. The price for the recontextualization of the self-determination principle, however, was enormous. In the Second Chechen war between 7,000 to 11,000 Russian soldiers died and between 25,000 to 50,000 ethnic Chechens. More than 200,000 have been driven from their homes.[23] Unlike Russia, Israel is a tiny state with no superpower pretentions. However, the 9/11 attacks served its purposes in a similar way that it served the Russians.

'The Terrorist Virus Crosses Borders'[24]

The Zionist movement was established in the late nineteenth century, with the idea that Jews needed a shelter and independence in their ancestral land. Jewish settlements in Palestine ever since threatened the Palestinians and the dream that Jews and Arabs would live peacefully together in the same land was shattered ever since again and again (Kimmerling and Migdal 1993; Khalidi 1997). The Oslo Agreements between Israel and the PLO, and the Declaration of Principles (September 1993) demonstrated a drastic change that occurred in both the Israeli and the Palestinian nations. However, the terms of the agreements disappointed many on both sides. With the failure of another attempt at peace in the July 2000 Camp David talks, the Palestinians started a second Intifada. The Israelis were furious at the Palestinians' attacks on civilians, which were committed in Israeli city centers and resulted in numerous civilian casualties. However, as the strong side in a so-called asymmetric warfare, it was mainly Israel that suffered worldwide condemnation for its methods of oppression and harming the Palestinians through the most technologically advanced and modern weapons (Ben-Eliezer 2012).

Less than a year after the beginning of the Second Intifada, the 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred. 'World in shock!' declared the Israeli headlines. The Israelis tried to show that Israel and the USA were sharing the same fate (see, *e.g.*, Shavit 2001). The recurrent motif – the differences between civilizations – recalled not only the rhetoric of the neo-conservatives in America and Putin's reaction to the Chechen upheaval, but that of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Israel as well, as he put it in a cabinet session after the 9/11 attacks: 'This is a war between good and evil… We were not surprised by the wickedness of Arab, Palestinian, Islamic, radical terrorism… The acts of terror against Israel's citizens are no different from the terrorism of Bin Laden… Terrorism is terrorism and murder is murder... We must not, and I point out, we must not allow the drawing of a line between terror against us and terror against others'.[25]

In the newly emerging GWT discourse, Sharon's words were meant to present a dichotomous world in which Israel stood on the cultured, enlightened side, while Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians stood across the divide. Their only desire was to bring down Israel, the United States, and indeed, the entire West. Sharon completely ignored the Palestinians' desire for self-determination. He also preferred to ignore the simple fact that the Palestinians had been under prolonged occupation. All that remained for Sharon was to persuade the American president that the boundaries of his discourse on the GWT encompassed the ethno-national conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and that all Palestinian nationalists should be tarnished with a terrorist brush.

This, however, was no easy task. The U.S. administration wanted to include Arab and Muslims states in the global coalition against 'terrorism' (U.S. Department of State 2001–2003). Moreover, the weakening of the Palestinian Authority, which was partly the result of Israeli tactics in the Second Intifada even prior to 9/11, seemed to the Americans a dangerous step that might strengthen the fundamentalist forces within Palestinian society. For these reasons, Secretary of State Powell phoned Sharon, Israeli President Shimon Peres, and Arafat right after 9/11, and urged them to enter into negotiations immediately. In addition, President Bush decided that Israel would not be part of the forthcoming international coalition. The idea was an anathema to Israel. After all, Sharon and his colleagues wanted to leverage Bin Laden's deeds to block any dialogue with Arafat and to step up the military action in the ethno-national conflict.

Like the Chechens in their passion, struggle, and suicidal attacks that are cults glorifying the dead, the Palestinians proved that nationalism, the 'sacred communion of citizens' as Smith (2009) calls it, had not faded away in the global, reflexive modern era. Sharon, however, insisted that the American and the Israeli cases were similar. He even tried to teach the American President a lesson saying: 'There is no such thing as good terrorism and bad terrorism… What you are asking us to do is to draw a distinction between terrorism against us and terrorism that is perpetrated against others' (Ben 2001). Bush, however, was not convinced.

One of the best spokespersons for the Israeli attempt to broaden the boundaries of the global war so that the Palestinians' national fight against Israel would be included in its discourse was Benjamin Netanyahu. Right after the 9/11 attacks, he was invited to the U.S. Congress and gave a talk entitled 'We are All Targets'. Netanyahu elaborated on the resemblance between the Israeli ('the little Satan') and American cases ('the Great Satan'). Even if the struggle appears to be localized, Netanyahu said, what drives the terror networks is hostility to the West and the desire to foment a reversal of history and impose a radical form of Islam worldwide. As for the solution to global Islamic terrorism, Netanyahu was very clear, 'direct military action'.[26] Netanyahu ignored the fact that terrorism itself – vicious and cruel as it might be – is generated in some cases as a national response to suppression, the denial of freedoms, and military occupation. Nor did he point out that the root of terrorism is not necessarily hatred but abysmal, collective despair, which in turn engenders hatred, and that counter-terrorism may lead to new waves of terrorism and bloodshed. In any case, even though Netanyahu's talk impressed many Republicans, the administration was not yet convinced. But then came January 3, 2002.

On that day, Israeli forces seized the arms ship 'Karine A' on the high seas after having kept the vessel under surveillance for some time. Military forces boarded the ship about 500 kilometers south of Eilat, Israel's southernmost city. The ship was carrying some 50 tons of ammunition for the Palestinian forces. The Israeli media was invited to take photos of the booty. As the ship was financed by Iran, which also supplied the weapons, the Israeli government saw the event as a great opportunity to change the GWT discourse by using the ship as the 'smoking gun' – evidence of the link between the Palestinian Authority, Iran, and the 'global terror network' (Levi-Stein 2002; Gutman 2002).

Similar to Putin's tendency to present every terrorist act against Russia by Chechen rebels as a threat to the free world that had to be dealt with under the rubric of the GWT, Sharon used the Karine A convoy in the same way. To hammer the point home, Chief of Staff Mofaz flew to Washington and presented facts and documents proving

the connection between the PLO, Arafat and Iran. Arafat still tried to convince the Americans that he did not know of the aborted attempt to smuggle weapons from Iran. The Americans, however, did not believe him, and he instantaneously lost the status he had acquired with them (Shavit 2004).

So too were the Palestinians' national aspirations thwarted. Now, the American administration supported Israel's re-conquest of the West Bank in the 2002 Operation Defensive Shield. Moreover, they did not object to Israel's special methods of oppression in the Intifada, which included human rights violations such as collective punishment, demolition of houses, arbitrary shootings, and targeted assassinations (Ben-Eliezer 2012). Israel succeeded in putting its ethno-national conflict with the Palestinians within the GWT discourse so much so that in June 2002, President Bush forced the Palestinians to elect a new, more moderate leader. Bush, however, did not pressure Israel to negotiate even with the new moderate leader (US Department of State 2003). As in the Russian-Chechen case, by recontextualizing national struggles as terrorist acts, the Americans approved of the Israeli desire to solve the ethnic problem by military means.

Even though, Israel accepted the U.S. roadmap, this did not mark any turning point in its policy. Sharon knew that the Palestinians would be unable to accept the American plan or to actualize it, since the Americans accepted the Israeli position that negotiations would be held only if and when the Palestinians gave up their armed struggle. As Dov Weissglas, Sharon's advisor explained, 'Bush formulated optimally what we believed… For the first time, the principle was accepted that before entering the negotiating room the pistols are left outside' (US Department of State 2003).

Putin and Sharon were consistent in using the GWT discourse to avoid any talks with their nationalistic rivals. As expected, in both cases, the lack of any substantial move towards peace and the oppressive methods the states were using led to the success of the more radical organizations on the other side. A survey by Al-Quds Center, a research institution, found that in August-September 2000, Hamas had the support of 9 to 12 per cent of the Palestinian population; the figure rose to 19 per cent in March 2002, and to 22.6 per cent the following month (see Steinberg 2008 and also Ringel-Hoffman 2002). The figures show that as in the Chechen's radical Islamic case, most Hamas supporters were driven more by their political gripes with the Israeli government than by their desire for a fundamentalist state. In other words, repressing ethno-nationalism did not bring about its disappearance, but its radicalization. Thus, Russia's 'jihadization' of the Chechen struggle and Israel's 'Hamasization' of the Palestinian struggle became self-fulfilling prophecies.

In time, Sharon appeared to have given up any hope that Israel could hold the occupied territories. Under his government, Israel withdrew from Gaza, and Sharon, as a result of the objections he received from his Likud party, established a new party 'Kadima', which presented the willingness for a two-state solution. Important as these steps were, they did not signify a real change in Israel's policy, since Sharon continued to insist that part of the territories that Israel conquered in 1967 would remain in its hands, and that most Jewish settlements in the territories would remain in their place as well in any possible agreement (Ben-Eliezer 2012: 157–212). Sharon knew that such demands, together with the idea that the Palestinians have to stop their national struggle as a pre-emptive step before any talks, would so much take the wind out of the Palestinians' sails so that Israel success in recontextualization the Palestinians claim for self-determination as terrorist acts, which threaten

the entire world and must be treated accordingly, would avoid any possibility for the Palestinians to realize their national aspirations.

Conclusions

Contrary to widespread, conventional modernist and globalist assumptions, we maintain that the intensification of globalization in the post-Cold War era has not diminished the frequency with which ethno-national movements have sought self-determination and independence. Likewise, even if some structural elements have made national states weaker and loosened the hold of their sovereignty, national feelings and sentiments as an important driving force in denying others' self-determination aspirations have not diminished within existing national states. The manuscript's purpose in this regard was not to present a comprehensive analysis of the complex process of self-determination's approval or denial, but to add one more variable (the GWT discourse) to the ways national aspirations are denied. It is important to note as well that we did not try to present the terror in general and its presence in Russia, Israel and the USA as fictitious. However, while the terrorist attacks against the three states were painful, distressed, indignant and uneasy to accept, they never constituted a threat to the very existence of these states and yet somehow the discourse was built around the idea that there was such a threat even to the entire humanity. All and all, our purpose was to present the way the discourse on global terror had two political consequences: first, it was being used as a means to avoid national aspirations; second, it indirectly encouraged the continuation of violence and war and reduced the chances for possible peace.

This is context through which self-determination has not disappeared. Rather, it is being made to disappear through the global terror rhetoric. In fact, the new criteria for self-determination denial had a worldly influence. The Yemeni regime, as Du Bouchet (2007) and Wilcke (2010) showed, was using the security rhetoric of the GWT to suppress the large Shia Zaydi population who lives in Northern Yemen under discriminatory religious and political policies and who organized themselves politically and militarily in the early 2000s against the central government. Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan as well embraced the rhetoric of the GWT to defend his government's response to political agitation and secessionist struggles in Xinjiang province and Tibet (Human Rights Watch 2002; Harris 2008). Recontextualization was also evident in the way in which Serbian students and intellectuals used Bush's 'war on terror' discourse in order to legitimize, retroactively, Serbian prior violence against Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo (Erjavec and Volcic 2007), and these are just a few examples.

Under these circumstances, it is little wonder that attempts at presenting an alternative discourse that excluded national liberation movements from the terror narrative, an idea that was raised, for example, by the OIC (the Organization of the Islamic Conference), failed completely.[27] Likewise, the narrative of 'criminalizing international violence', which was raised right after 9/11 by both Germany and Japan who claimed that military instruments were largely unsuitable for the so-called 'global terror', was not accepted (see Katzenstein 2003; on the idea at large, see Held 2002). Escalating fighting is sometimes considered a strategy used by national groups to achieve their goals (Shehadi 1993: 47). Even terrorist acts are part of this strategy. However, as we demonstrated, the response of national states to such steps also contributed to the escalation by constructing a new cultural discourse that turned claims for self-determination into a terrorist danger menacing all of civilization.

The GWT raised many questions about the gulf between human rights and international security threats (Wilson 2005). Many of the terrorist attacks are indeed devastating and stand against humanity. A price to pay for their suppression is indeed required. These questions, however, are not relevant to the cases presented here. The response of America and its allies to 9/11 made terms such as self-determination almost synonymous with the attempt to hurt Western interests and values. The Chechens and the Palestinians, however, wanted nothing more than to realize their national aspirations. Anti-Americanism, anti-Western sentiments or political extremism did appear in their struggle. However, they were less part of the demand for self-determination, and more the result of the failure to achieve it.

NOTES

[1] The First International Conference for Self-Determination, Conference Proceedings. URL: http://www.claritypress.com/ConferenceProceedings.html. On the issue of self-determination in the wake of the Cold-War see Kelly (1998–1999).

[2] Woodrow Wilson's self-determination speech on February 11, 1918, at FirstWorldWar.com.

[3] Following Francis Fukayama's ideas regarding 'the end of history' in the triumph of America's liberalism and capitalism. On 'reflexive modernization', see Beck *et al.* (2003).

[4] On discourse and its importance as an analytical tool, mainly in the tradition of Foucault, see Miliken (1997); Wodak (2006).

[5] President Bush Addresses the Nation, September 7, 2003, at http://www.pbs.org/newsour/bb/white_house/july-dec03/bush_iraq_speech.html

[6] Donald Rumsfeld, on September 16, 2001 in 'The US and the Global Coalition against Terrorism', September 2001 – December 2003, U.S. *Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs;* Bush's Speech in the Congress, September 20, 2001.

[7] George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress Following the 9/11 Attacks, delivered September 20, 2001.

[8] On the idea of weak states that influence American foreign policy, see Rotberg (2003).

[9] President Putin in a television appearance on September 4, 2004.

[10] 104 Congress, 1st Session, H.Con.Res.25, February 7, 1995, taken from http://thomas.lo.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c104:H.CON.RES.25.

[11] History of the Department of State during the Clinton Presidency, Global Issues I, U.S. Department of State at www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/8523.htm.

[12] See *Current Events*, a Weekly Reader (February 26, 1996). On the difficulties of ignoring human rights in the global era, see Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui (2005).

[13] See Background Briefing by Senior Administration Office, in Plaza Hotel, Oslo, November 2, 1999 at Clinton3.nara.gov/…/oslo110299b.html; UK Condemns Chechnya Ultimatum, *BBC News*, Dec. 7, 1999; Russia Defiant Over Chechnya, *BBC News*, Dec. 8, 1999.

[14] http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism/sept_11.

[15] www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,53073,00html.

[16] Russian President's Statement, September 24, 2001.

http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/09/24/0002_type82912_138534.shtml.

[17] Transcript of the Meeting with Students of Crawford High School, Crawford, Texas, November 15, 2001. Taken from http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2001/11/15/0001_type82914type82917 type84779.

[18] *The National Security Strategy of the U.S.* September 2002.

[19] *Human Rights Watch*, 'Russia/Chechnya', 14/2 (d) (February 2002). See also Szasz (1999); Daalder and O'Hanion (2000).

[20] *North Caucasus Analysis*, 2(18), December 31, 2002.

[21] 'Powell says Russia Fighting Terrorists in Chechnya', in North Caucasus Analysis, 3 (16), December 31, 2002. See also 'Chechen Rebels Condemn U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell for Calling Them Terrorists', North Caucasus Analysis. See all results for this publication. Browse back issues of this publication by date.

[22] RIA Novosti, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov in his report to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, July 13, 2004.

[23] See Amnesty International Issues Reports on Disappearances, *Jamestown Foundation*, 24 May, 2007.

[24] Sever Flozker, 'The New Nazis', *Yediot Aharonot* [daily], September 12, 2001.

[25] *Knesset Protocol* (September 16, 2001).

[26] Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech in Front of the US Congress, September 24, 2001, www.freerepublic.com/locus.f-news/531335/posts.

[27] The OIC is an international organization of 57 member states with a permanent delegation to the United Nations. See The US Department of State, 'The United States and the Global Coalition Against Terrorism', Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs.

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