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they looked rich and had obviously done well under the Doe regime, but now their time was over and it was the turn of the young men at the checkpoint to get rich. More than just being “shiny”, individual civilians who are felt to have played a particularly supportive or collaborative role with the enemy are often the first to be dragged from their houses to be lynched or summarily executed in war. Women who have had enemy lovers are frequently humiliated. At the liberation of France in 1945, many such women were forcibly stripped, shaved, paraded through the streets and even shot and hanged.

Punishment and forced compliance

Revenge reasoning merges quickly along the spectrum of anti-civilian ideology into more cold and calculated punishment thinking. A Yale University Professor, Stathis Kalyvas, has written in detail about the logic of violence in civil wars. He emphasizes how often extreme violence is intended to enforce the compliance of a civilian population or to act as a deterrent to prevent them from supporting the other side. In such cases massacres, killings or the violent control of a population are all intended “to shape the behaviour of a targeted audience” in an effort to realign people’s incentives in order to ensure their passive or active support of the perpetrating group.²³ In other words, it gives them little choice but to obey. A further purpose in such violence is often to polarize society and force a deep cleavage of enmity within it. Vicious acts are used to set one community against another or to ensure that people have an overriding incentive to take sides. This incentive is usually their own safety and survival. Deeply dualistic ideologies, such as Marxist and Islamist thinking, believe that deep cleavages of class or faith already exist and that violence is the means by which they are rightly revealed and forced upwards into popular consciousness. Their intention is precisely to polarize society and render this dualism, and its choice, explicit.

Collective punishment that serves to compel, deter or polarize has always been a particularly cruel aspect of war and rebellion. Sometimes it is deliberately selective in its choice of victims in an attempt

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to eradicate leaders and opinion formers. At other times, it is deliberately indiscriminate. As such, Stathias Kalyvas notes how “it often serves the two overlapping functions of elimination and deterrence”. Here we start to move into that part of the anti-civilian spectrum in which the civilian ethic is suspended and abrogated rather than utterly rejected. Collective punishment is usually, but not always, a means rather than an end in itself. It is used instrumentally as a way to achieve wider goals. Authorities and armed groups which deploy collective punishment of civilian populations may recognize the civilian ethic and respect it in some contexts but decide to suspend it in others when they reckon that group punishment may be useful and effective.

Collective punishment sets out deliberately to hurt people in the enemy group as a whole so as to discourage, deter and disempower them. It is, essentially, punishment by proxy. Mass attacks against civilians are often deliberately punitive and punish civilians as representatives of their group. Economic restrictions and deprivation on whole civilian populations are often used to punish a rebellious society in the hope that they will become forcibly subjected to authority and deterred from future struggle.

Collective punishment of the civilian population is widely used in all wars and always has been. It was an integral part of pre-colonial raids in Africa and Asia and also became an essential aspect of the extension of colonial authority. In some places, British imperial policy operated with the express practice of “punitive expeditions”. Thomas Pakenham records one example from the Niger delta in 1882 where people had attacked and threatened the activities of British trading companies operating up and down the river. The British Consul, Edward Hewett, gave the various communities involved an ultimatum to report or hand over the people responsible. When they refused he sent a naval vessel upriver to bombard three towns—Asaba, Abari and Torofani. The towns were destroyed and troops were also landed to ensure their destruction was complete. The inhabitants were killed or expelled and the bodies of women and children left in the charred

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ruins of their huts—an example to others.²⁴ In the Second World War, the Nazis consistently used a policy of collective punishment as reprisals for attacks against them by resistance movements in occupied Europe. Thousands of villagers and townspeople were murdered in this way, often on a 10:1 ratio—ten civilians executed for every one German soldier killed in an attack.

Collective or representative punishment remains alive and well in atrocities against civilians today. Many of the killings by the different insurgents in Iraq have been punitive. Some are designed to punish and deter particular groups of civilians for their cooperation in the democratization of Iraq. Speaking just before the first post-Occupation elections in January 2005, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the late leader of Al Qaeda insurgents in Iraq, made it clear that “we have declared a bitter war against the principle of democracy and all those who seek to enact it”.²⁵ For Zarqawi, democracy as man-made law is in violation of the principle of rule by God’s law, so that “candidates in elections are seeking to become demi-gods while those who vote for them are infidels”. Such statements by Zarqawi and Osama bin Laden say that such apostasy can expect to be punished, and it has been. Roadside explosions and suicide bombs are carefully aimed at civilians who are deemed to be collaborating or supporting the development of the new democratic and “apostate” Iraqi state brought about by the invasion and occupation of US-led Coalition forces.

Two examples taken from hundreds of incidents recorded by the UK-based group, Iraq Body Count, serve to illustrate the point. One January morning in 2004, a group of Iraqi laundry ladies was being driven to their jobs at a US base near Habbaniyah when their minibus was sprayed with gunfire. Four women were killed instantly with five severely wounded. In scores of incidents, hundreds of Iraqi men have been killed by bombs and gunfire as they have queued up outside recruiting stations to sign up for well paid jobs in the new Iraqi police force. The message from the insurgents is clear. These bombings and shootings confirm that they will punish anyone who takes part in the creation of the new Iraqi state and that their civilian status is

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meaningless and completely discounted by their essential collaboration. Most civilian killing in Iraq is now explicitly sectarian along Sunni and Shia lines. Here too, alongside revenge and reciprocity, a compliance logic is important. Through anti-civilian violence, each side is determined to cow the other into submission or exile as state formation takes its bloody course once more.

In many other of the world's protracted insurgency and counter-insurgency wars, there are similar punishment-based policies of civilian killing, wounding and deprivation. Many of them use symbolic atrocity to get their message across in terrifying terms. In northern Uganda, the world has been shocked by the symbolic mutilations which have become a hallmark of attacks against the civilian population by the Lord's Resistance Army. Civilians working their fields or journeying by road have been brutally and carefully cut up. Rebels have held people down to cut off their ears, noses and lips or to gouge out their eyes. Sometimes they force civilians to do this to one another. This is to serve as a brutal and symbolic punishment for what the LRA considers as the treachery of Acholi people who have sometimes informed Ugandan government forces of their movements and all of whom become effectively subject to government authority in the protected villages which they are now forced to inhabit. The mutilations are designed to prevent people from hearing, seeing, smelling or speaking of the rebels. People riding bicycles or walking along roads have also been routinely caught by the LRA and been killed or had their legs cut off. These symbolic attacks are to slow down the movement of information—the logic being that a person on a bicycle can report rebel movements more quickly, so that riding bicycles or moving between towns is punished by death or mutilation by the LRA.

All these atrocities are intended to serve warning to the majority of the Acholi population and to mark them out as a treacherous people, undeserving of the rebel group which fights for the renewal of their land and society. The LRA understand these specific punishments as a means to condemn whole sections of Acholi society which have re-

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jected their movement. Together with their wider policy of massacre and abductions, they seem to hope that such suffering will eventually prove redemptive by subjecting, humbling and finally transforming Acholi society into a new and reformed society that will rise to be powerful once again.

Suicide bombings by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah's Qassam Brigade that have killed and wounded Israeli civilians in buses and restaurants also have an important element of collective punishment alongside a determination to fight back, terrorize and demoralize. Much Israeli policy in the Palestinian Territories in recent years has also seemed to mix security measures with a persistent strategy of collective punishment. Sometimes, the nature of Israeli collective punishment is obvious. Many of the house demolitions that Israeli bulldozers have carried out in recent years have inevitably involved the suffering of a whole family or a whole neighbourhood rather than the alleged individuals who are deemed directly responsible for hiding weapons or shooting mortars into neighbouring settlements. Many of Israel's more general security measures have also combined a security requirement with a punitive logic. Curfews, school closures, border closures and the intricate network of checkpoints seem to have been designed as much with the frustration, humiliation, subjection and impoverishment of Palestinian people in mind as with immediate Israeli security benefits.

Acts of resistance to authoritarian power usually meet particularly savage and public punishment. An act of resistance can enrage and undermine a group or individual in power so deeply that it makes them feel compelled and entitled to increase their ferocity enormously. Brutality following an act of resistance is usually then publicly displayed in some way to serve as an example to others who might consider resisting. Traditionally, cities which have dared to resist have been utterly ransacked. Resistance leaders have often been tortured, killed and hung up for people to see. Women who have resisted rape have often been more brutally raped and then appallingly murdered. Chinese women who resisted rape by Japanese soldiers in Nanking

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were made an example of in this way, often having their eyes torn out and their breasts, nose and ears cut off.²⁶ Resistance can effect a challenge which can bring the most extreme punitive retaliation.

Osama bin Laden's reasons for killing civilians are about revenge, reciprocity and collective punishment combined. In his 1998 declaration on "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders", bin Laden quotes the Quran's exhortation to "fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them" and then spells out what he sees as the contemporary implication of this verse in his own *fatwa*. This affirms that "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it" so as to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the Holy mosque in Mecca "from their grip" and "in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam".²⁷

Beyond his general disgust at the *jabiliyah* of the American people, Osama bin Laden has always given very specific reasons for why he is suspending the civilian ethic in his war with America and its European allies. Bin Laden's suspensionist argument is based on a direct morality around the right to revenge and self-defence. This right is based upon the sanctity of blood and land. The shedding of Muslim blood must be reciprocated in kind while contaminated holy land must be cleansed. In all his arguments, both blood and land are understood religiously. They are from God and are His by right. When either is taken it must be returned.

In his letter to the American people bin Laden gives a simple and direct reason for his attacks. "Why are we fighting and attacking you? The answer is very simple: because you attacked us and continue to attack us."²⁸ He goes on to address the question of why he is attacking civilians in particular and denies the civilian status of American citizens with a range of arguments around their complicity in American aggression. He makes it clear that he sees America's people as thoroughly complicit in all US policies as voters, tax-payers and the people who make up and support the US army. This is why "the

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American people cannot be innocent of all the crimes committed by the Americans and Jews against us”.

A great part of bin Laden’s justification for killing civilians centres on blood-based reciprocity. Blood is extremely important to bin Laden. It is the medium in which he thinks and acts in relation to the West. His letters and his earlier declarations make regular references to it and to a rightful reciprocity between “our blood” and “your blood”. He is determined that “whoever has killed our civilians, then we have the right to kill theirs.” The people that he counts as *his* civilians are many and their blood is much. They include 1.5 million Iraqi children he estimates as killed by the UN sanctions regime, millions of Muslims he regards as abandoned by the West in the wars in Bosnia, Chechnya and Kashmir and, of course, “the blood pouring out of Palestine must be equally revenged”. In response, his military strategy is one which is always ready to offer up the blood of the *jihadist* as well as the blood of the enemy. The righteous, self-giving blood of the believer is truly sacrificial for bin Laden. It pleases God so that He gives out rewards in heaven and justice on earth. In his original 1996 *fatwa*, Bin Laden is in awe of Muslim martyrs in this fight, “whose blood is the oil for the flame which guides us in the darkness of confusion”.

Bin Laden also uses blood as the dominant metaphor in his analysis of what he sees as American and Jewish economic exploitation. The “White House gang” with their oil companies and corporations are “bleeding” Iraq. They are “bloodsuckers” and “behind them stand the Jews, who control your policies, media and economy”. The “policy of the enemy is to bleed the financial and the human resources of the Ummah”. Bin Laden’s reciprocal economic strategy is, therefore, to pin down the US in Iraq at such a financial cost that he then bleeds them dry.

Bin Laden’s 2004 letter to the Europeans (“our neighbours north of the Mediterranean”) is an explanation of his actions as revenge and righteous reciprocity and also an offer of a conditional peace.

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“What happened on 11 September 2001 and 11 March 2004 [the Madrid train bombings] is your commodity that was returned to you... Which religion considers your killed ones innocent and our killed ones worthless? And which principle considers your blood real blood and our blood water? Reciprocal treatment is fair and the one who starts injustice bears greater blame.”²⁹

Bin Laden’s offer—which was open for three months—was also made through the medium of blood: “As for those who want reconciliation, we have given them a chance. Stop shedding our blood so as to preserve your blood.”

In bin Laden’s reasoning, blood is thicker than civilian status. As the power and symbol of life, blood belongs to God alone. Every time a Muslim kills an animal to eat, he bleeds it to death, leaving its blood to flow back into the earth to God. Blood is deeply holy. It is also sacrificial. Bin Laden’s killings return to God the same measure of blood that was wrongly taken from His people. Bin Laden sees this as pleasing God who will duly bring about changes—not the least of which will be the awakening of the people of the West. The shedding of their blood and that of their children will serve to shock the people of the West and bring them to reflect on the reasons why they are being killed. This will make them see the injustices of which they are a part. They will be drawn into an inevitable discussion of blood-based injustices.

Land is also understood religiously by bin Laden and experienced just as viscerally as blood. “I still feel the pain of the loss of Al-Quds [Jerusalem] in my internal organs. That loss is like a burning fire in my intestines.” The task is “to cleanse the land from these occupiers”. In this, bin Laden’s political theology of blood and land is similar to that of Hamas as they resist Israeli occupation by attacks on Israeli civilians. Speaking in Damascus after Hamas’ election victory in January 2006, Khaled Mashaal, the exiled political leader of Hamas, affirmed that “there is a difference between killing and resistance” and that “the resistance against the occupation will continue until it disappears from our soil”.³⁰ Just as oppression cries out for vengeance, so does holy land cry out for cleansing. The medium for both is blood. Land and honour can no longer be restored without

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killing. As bin Laden wrote in 1996: “Without shedding blood, no degradation and branding can be removed from the forehead.” Blood will flow in the cleansing of the land and the eviction of what is humiliating and unclean.

Because it works—utility

Bin Laden, Hamas, the Lord’s Resistance Army, Liberian factions and Allied bombers in the Second World War do not just kill civilians to punish people and to keep the death toll fair. They also kill civilians because they think it works as strategy. This brings us to another form of anti-civilian ideology—that of ruthless pragmatism. This is the idea that killing civilians can help you win, indeed that it is necessary to winning. Political leaders frequently decide that killing civilians makes strategic or tactical sense as a means of securing their war aims which may relate to self defence, conquest or political change. In doing so, many emphasize the necessity, rather than the desirability, of what they do. By framing anti-civilian policies in a context of extreme emergency where their options are few, they also feel that such actions are justified as morally exceptional. Because their cause is morally great, killing civilians is acceptable under the circumstances. This political calculation believes in killing civilians as a means which is justified by the gravity of the ends they seek.

In moral terms, this is a classic form of consequentialist thinking which primarily judges an act as good or bad not for what it is in itself but for what it might achieve—the consequences it may bring about. This leads to the relative position that killing civilians may be right and acceptable in some contexts but not in others. Indeed, many leaders implement a war in which, in different contexts, they will adopt pro-civilian and anti-civilian methods simultaneously. They profess belief in the civilian ethic and continue to apply it in some parts of their war but in certain operations and at certain times they argue for the suspension of the ethic in light of a superior consequentialist morality of necessity and utility in such killing.