Ethics and International Relations

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Welcome Remarks by Mr. M. Rasgotra

We are privileged to have with us today His Excellency the Ambassador of Italy. A visiting professor at two universities in Italy, he is also an author who has written a good deal, a rare achievement for a serving diplomat. I could never write anything other than reports to the government when I was an ambassador. It is very gracious of him to come and talk to us about a subject on which he has written a book-Ethics and International Relations. It is a fascinating subject because the general impression going around is that in politics, and in diplomacy in particular, there is no ethic except pushing your own self-interest.

Mr. Ambassador, your audience comprises our researchers in various disciplines. You saw upstairs at the presentation what we are doing in international relations, security studies in internal and external sectors and in the area of our domestic problems. We have specialists here on the United States of America, Russia, China, and Japan. They are all keen to have the benefit of your thinking.

Mr. Roberto Toscano

Thank you very much. I am very happy to be here with you. I don't know how much time I have, but just stop me when I go too far. Indeed, the question is why does a diplomat who has been in this profession for 40 years (so I cannot hide my age of course) turn to a theme such as ethics and international relations. The real reason is that I think that any field of human activity has an ethical dimension. If doctors have medical ethics, if businessmen are supposed to have business ethics, then why should diplomacy be the only area that is exempt from that consideration? But more than that, I would say that each individual has an ethical reference.

The problem that I see is that the circle of identification is drawn in different ways. An extreme individualist draws the circle around him or herself. Then there is something that has been defined by sociologists as an 'amoral familism'. An American sociologist, Banfield, went to Southern Italy in the early 1950s and studied the local population. He was really surprised because he saw people who within the family were responsible, good and humane, but when they crossed the threshold of their home, they were capable of doing just about anything for the good of the family. But you can add many different dimensions. How about racism: my race versus the other races? How about nationalism: my nation versus the other nations? How about not religion, but religious fundamentalism? It means that humans have the tendency to draw the circle of recognition and moral responsibility in different ways. Those who are not included in that circle are fair game.

I don't want to do advertising for myself, but I just gave a manuscript to an Indian publisher for a book that will come out soon and one of the chapters is called "The ethics of Machiavelli". You will be surprised: ethics of

Machiavelli? Yes, because if you look at Machiavelli's message, his ethical reference was, simply, the good of the State. He wanted to build Italy into a strong republic overcoming the fact that it was, at that time, just an open field for invasions, torn between the German emperor and the Pope. There was no Italy as such at that time, and thus his ethical reference, which was trumping everything else. But I cannot claim to have discovered this fact myself. Once, many years ago, I found a very good essay by Isaiah Berlin which as much as said: wait a minute, Machiavelli was not amoral; he just had a different ethical framework. That, incidentally, is not so rare. Nobody today in any country would take Machiavelli's percepts and present them as a blueprint for political behavior within the country. Nobody would say cheat, kill, as long as you can run the country. Lots of people do it, but they don't say it. That is why it is not claimed as a reference. But Machiavelli is still dominant in international relations, which means that people who are moral within their own national community are not moral beyond the borders. I am just describing it, and then anybody can choose. Maybe somebody can say it is right, but let us first see how it stands. Understanding must come before judgment.

The focus of my analysis is conflict, because it is conflict that reveals the pathology and the consequences of this approach. I would say right away that I reject the consideration and the claim that the only realists are those who discard ethics. It is very simple to explain why. It has been proved also by recent events. Military force, which is necessary for security and defense, is definitely not sufficient. If you lose credibility, if you lose prestige and if you lose an image of being somebody who can be reliable, somebody who does not sacrifice everything to a narrow view of one's own interest, then as the saying goes, you can fool some of the people some of the time but not all the people all the time. The price to pay politically and in terms of diminished security is huge. I don't have to tell you what I am referring to and talk about eight years of the policy of the US, which forgot that a great part of its strength is in what American writer Joseph Nye has defined as soft power. Soft power is not an alternative to hard power. Of course you need hard power, but if you have just hard power you cannot invade the whole world to keep it at peace. You have to use force when it is necessary, but you also have to project a positive image of your country and a positive image cannot be projected if you declare that you will do anything, without any rule, in order to pursue

your own interest and not take into consideration, at least as a compromise, the interest of others. So, as you see, ethics is right there and ethics is not in contradiction with realism. The book that was mentioned got published in the year 2000 in Italy. There I really criticized the very realist thought which is so dominant in international relations for a very simple reason: because even the so-called realists, whenever they describe the enemy, use moral categories. Take, for example, the term "empire of evil". Is it a realistic or a moral description? "Axis of evil" -- what is it? It is moral, it is an epithet, it is not a scientific description, and it is not a realistic description. Besides, in order to gather internal consensus you always have recourse to moral considerations. I have never seen any country saying we are stronger, therefore we have the right to lead. We are stronger and we are better and we are good, everybody said that from the Soviet communists to Adolf Hitler. They all tried to project a self-image and a claim that was also ethical, in ways that we might think perverse, but still they did.

We might have peace as a goal -- quite a legitimate goal of course. I am in a country now where the concept of non-violence is a significant component of the general world view. Yet thinking of abolishing conflict as such might be a worthy goal for the future, but it does not seem to be a very immediate or very practical possibility. What we should do instead is to focus on certain types of conflict and to put these types of conflicts beyond the pale of humanity. I am not talking about what we should do; I am talking about what we are doing. How about the convention against genocide? It is already there. How about the prohibition of torture? It is already there. And there is a third form of conflict that deserves to be listed together with genocide and torture and that, of course, is terrorism.

In the same book, there is another chapter on the definition of terrorism. It is really strange, but when we talk about terrorism we don't know what we are talking about. There is no universally agreed definition. Some would say: well, when you see it you can tell. But we are talking here about international law, so this needs rigorous definitions. But why is it so difficult to reach an agreement on a definition of terrorism? It is very simple. It is because most subjects, state and non-state, have the disturbing tendency to claim exemption for their own cause from the definition of terrorism. I will give you one example. We would all accept the description or

definition of 'a terrorist act' in the Article 1 of the Organization of Islamic Conference's Convention on Terrorism. But there is also an 'Article 2' and it says..."however, national liberation struggle is not terrorism." What does that mean? National liberation struggle is the cause, terrorism is the means. This is the same fallacy, logically and politically, as saying "war against terror", it is akin to saying "war against the Kalashnikov". What does that mean? Besides, there is one kind of terrorism that is defined as radical, Islamist, Wahabi, fundamentalist, but it is only one kind, not the only one. In America, there have been people putting bombs in abortion clinics. That is terrorism, of course. Somebody might even think the cause of saving unborn children is a worthy one, but still it is terrorism. There have been terrorists putting bombs under ugly buildings. Sometimes all of us would like to do that, but we stop before doing it. That is terrorism too. So, it is like if we had a convention saying terrorism is terrible, but if you do it for children it is okay. This is really perverse. It is logically, not just politically and legally absurd. And yet we are stuck there, we are absolutely stuck. I think that a country like India should be very much in favour of breaking this stalemate because it is very simple. Terrorism has nothing to do with the cause. Even the worthiest of causes can be pursued by terrorism. Second, it has nothing to do with the subject (person or persons) committing it, since the same subject can be a terrorist, a guerilla fighter, or a political activist. If you take Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hezbollah has been all three according to the needs of the time. How about Northern Ireland? In Northern Ireland there was repression of terrorism and, at the same time, a political process at the end of which there are terrorists (because the IRA is doubtlessly terrorist) who have turned into a political force. One might want to decide if it is a good idea or a bad idea, but it happens. So, metaphysically, the category is not the IRA. It is empirically that you have to categorise what people do. And I don't want to mention situations in the Middle East, where well known terrorist leaders have become statesmen. You name them: we diplomats have certain limitations. Nor can anybody imagine a convention on genocide saying genocide is terrible, but if you do it for a good cause, it is not. The same for torture. Torture can be justified against terrorism, so let us justify terrorism against torture, and we can keep going down and down to the most inhumane and retrograde way of dealing in international relations. If we have any notions of inevitable (human) progress it should be disabused. We

have piracy even now, even though we thought it was something for history books.

Why is an ethical discourse so difficult once you deal with someone, a group or individual, who is beyond your own circle of recognition? We should focus simultaneously on different concepts -- psychological, ethical and political. One important individual that has become very popular, (although for many years very few people talked about it) is identity. Some say identity is a negative concept because it separates one individual from the others, but do we think then that we can pursue the very noble goal of the 'abstract universal human being'? First of all, usually when people claim that they have discovered the 'universal human being', the characteristics of such a being coincide with the characteristics of those who have defined this being. I don't want to name any country, but it is the concept of assimilation that is problematic. First, it is not universally accepted even by those who do the assimilation. Second, it is flawed because usually it is not assimilation of human traits per se, but of what the assimilator believes and says. Finally it entails a cultural impoverishment. We are fighting for maintaining biodiversity, but how about cultural diversity? It is even more important. Identity is normal, it is the salt of the earth. We want to be different. But there are different ways of approaching that identity. First of all non-democratic and violent ideologues try to peddle a view of identity that I would define as extreme. I would describe it as idolatrous. They will come to you and say you are one thing and the rest of the world is not what you are.

There is a very interesting book on identity by Amartya Sen that I strongly advise you to read. Sen says that identity is good; it is so good that it has to be plural and only if it is plural, it is not dangerous. So, each of us has different elements of recognition one is man or woman, young or old, politically right, left or centre, of a religion or another, and so on and, adding these dimensions, we have a harmonious and non-dangerous human being. Another writer, Amin Maalouf, wrote a book where he said just about the same thing at the beginning of the book. He says: "They ask me who I am and I say I am a Frenchman. So, they say yes, but what kind of a French-man? Of Lebanese origin! Yes, but what kind of a Lebanese? An Arab Lebanese! But what kind of Arab Lebanese? Christian Arab Lebanese! Yes, but what kind of Christian? Eastern Christian! But at the end of it all,

what are you? And there I get very angry because I am all of the above, as simple as that".

But this is the problem of education. Why am I saying this? First because the murderous identity is the single identity. And second, because the big problem of our world is how to accept diversity with more proximity. After all, isn't this is what globalization is all about? In my hometown in Northern Italy (200,000 people), in the 20 years that I lived there I saw somebody from Africa or from the Middle East walking the street just once or twice. Now 25% of the children in my elementary school are immigrant. Difference has come knocking at our door. In this country, in India, you have a different experience, because you have lived with the differences (communal, racial, et al) for centuries if not millennia. In our case we are also a composite of different peoples today, but till only recently we thought we were only "us". Now, definitely, that is over. But we can correctly recognize this difference or the sum total of the differences only if we can recognize the complexity of what we ourselves are. Otherwise, we build a construct that is not real. Not only that but, as somebody said about certain extreme forms of nationalism, we have the invention of tradition and we live in imagined communities as if it was always a golden age when we were among ourselves, until some nasty people came from somewhere and spoiled everything. This is the first step to racism: the rejection of all but our own selves. Europeans thought that they were so much better than the Americans who beat up black people. Now sometimes we turn out to be good and sometimes not so good. So, we are being put to test as to how we cope with the difference. Of course we need good institutions, as well as social and economic ways of absorbing immigrants, because if they are unemployed then there is criminality. But we also need a different ethical approach, a different mental software. We need a different way of approaching and relating to difference.

As I said, one possible approach is that of assimilation and it would be great to believe that we are all the same, black or white. But there seems to be a flaw or something in this that flattens the richness of cultural traditions and religious plurality. So, somebody said, let us do the opposite. If you move from France across to the UK you will hear about multiculturalism. Here, the different peoples live in the same country, but you live with your people, eat your own food, have your own leaders, and practice your own religion. But this does not work either, because recent episodes of terrorism have shown that there are some people who just do not integrate. The goal, I think, should be integration on the basis of common citizenship, but not assimilation from a cultural point of view. I really did not like it when Prime Minister Blair once said, "those who live here have to share our values". Wait a minute: they have to share our laws, but their values are private. The laws are for everybody. Let us draw this distinction and keep it quite clear. Otherwise, since their values are so much tied to their religious foundations and so on that, slowly, a pretense at cultural integration would creep in. My approach, therefore, would be neither assimilation nor multi-culturalism, but "cross culturalism". It is something totally different, because cross culturalism means that you live with the others, relate to the others and at some point you finally recognize that what you are is not the product of a linear development but of constant exchange. You can tell from the language, the art and the food in any country, that we are the product of constant exchange through centuries and millennia. I claim this is not an idealistic position, but a realistic one. If we deny this on ideological grounds, we would need to steel ourselves and get ready for confrontations and conflicts. Of course, there will be problems, even within a family, to cope with differences, but I don't think we have much of a choice. We cannot go back. Even thinking of going back to a homogenous society is pathetic and ridiculous, something that could be described as reactionary utopia, a utopia not towards the future but towards the past.

Now, there is nothing wrong with identifying with our own people. Quite the contrary, it can be the source of creativity, and of active participation in common positive causes. For instance, the nation-state is still the main framework for our activity politically and economically. So, the world-state is not about to come and, personally, I am not looking forward to it. But the nation-state should not be seen as the only social and organizational avenue of life open to humans. Why? There is the local level. The local level is important. I come from a country where everybody is very much attached not to the region, but to the town and to the city. This is one of the main pointers to our identity. The nation-state entity, of course, remains the center point since politically we have not found any formula to project real democracy beyond this point. We can talk about the UN and the NGOs as being the most democratic and peaceful institutions of global

governance, but we are not yet there. If we talk politics, if we talk political participation, it is still the nation-state. But it does not stop there, because for us there is the European Union and forms of regional participation and associations (as there are in Latin America, Asia and Africa) and then there is the global level, where the UN of course is the main institution, but it is very plural. We cannot say that international law does not exist. Somebody has been saying it very recently, but we cannot really say that for the very simple reason that it is not true and it is not in our interest. Do we really think that, even if we are the strongest, the law of the jungle favours us? Of course we cannot say that there is an international world democracy, since the powerful do dominate the world. And yet, may be we should reflect on how democracy started within each body politic. People like to say that democracy started with the Magna Carta in 1215. But what was it? It was a pact between a sovereign and a bunch of warlords. It was, like "guys, we cannot spend all our time beating each other on the head. Let us find some rules of the game". That is the first step. But in order to have full democracy with universal suffrage in the same country, the United Kingdom had to wait until the 20th century. It took 800 years to start from a certain rather medieval form of law to reach out to the law of democracy. Can we then, instead, pretend, with reference to the international system, that if it is not democratic we don't recognize it as legal? There is something strange there. We don't have the same claim toward nation states. There can be legality in an aristocratic, monarchic system, if the laws are respected. But that, indeed, has been the historical experience of Europe for centuries. So, don't knock international law too much because it is not very different from what domestic law is. Let us face it: even in the best cases, where is total equality? Let us admit that equal implementation of the law is not the normal experience of human beings living in nation states. Otherwise, we are telling stories to each other. What our political activity should be focused upon is to introduce more and more elements of equality and of fairness, but we cannot take it for granted. At times we look at the international system and say: "There are the permanent members of the Security Council: they are more equal than others. Therefore there is no international law". I am not so sure that the reasoning is valid.

But where does conflict come from? Is it because people are evil? Actually there are some pretty evil people around and that is for sure. But I am not talking about

individual violence; I am talking about violence that involves millions of people. Why is it that people who apparently were very normal the day before suddenly become monsters the next day? Well, first a certain ideological propaganda is put to work. Some intellectuals are very good in building up a climate of hatred. Usually, they refer to history -- history a little manipulated, of course. In this history 'we' were always the victims and 'they' were always the perpetrators. The bad things we did, we forget. We were not just the victims, but were the princes too and then some lesser people came along and spoiled everything. That is only one part. But then come the real things. There are grievances, grievances for very good reasons. There are social, economic, cultural issues; there are people who are deprived of their rights. For three years I chaired a working group in the Development Assistance Committee of OECD in Paris. The group was on conflict prevention and development assistance. So, we gathered around the table a number of experts and what came out was extremely interesting to me. What came out was that, for instance absolute poverty is not a precursor or a signal for impending conflict. Relative poverty is. If a society lives like the hunter - gatherers in the Kalahari Desert, there can be tiny conflicts between a little group and another, but not a major confrontation. When you come from outside to a society in Africa where there were two groups traditionally the cattle breeders and the agriculturalists and you start a wonderful programme for breeding cows, dairy farms and so on, that group, that usually is also tied to a tribe, is lifted and the others stay where they were. Well, guess what? Next day somebody discovers that a very interesting means of production is not the tractor but the Kalashnikov. That is almost an inevitable reaction of the aggrieved and of those left behind. But on the other hand there is the problem of leadership, in that there is something else that can start conflictual situation -- greed. So, greed and grievance! Greed means that somebody uses political power only to get personal or tribal or group advantage over the common interest of the country. That definitely is a source of conflict.

But, some people say, 'well, people are not so bad, they would be morally responsive to considering the rights of others' and so on. But, ultimately, there naturally comes a time when they follow authority. There is authority and they just obey. This has been proved true. In the 1960s, there was an incredible experiment. I don't know if you have heard about it. A certain Professor Milgram,

in an American university, gathered a group of volunteers for a scientific experiment. They were sort of human guinea pigs. They were connected to to electrodes and there was a switch which was supposed to send electric shocks running through them. It was all phoney, there was no shock. But whenever a volunteer turned on the switch, the 'victims' started screaming. After that, the volunteers looked at the professor and the professor said "go ahead". Most of them went ahead. They were not getting money. They did not fear him and they did not even know him before that. But through this experiment, he had become the 'authority'. Now, this is pretty frightening. But there is something that is even more frightening, if you can think about it, and that is conformity. Another thing that for me has been an eye opener is a book called *Ordinary Men* by an American Professor called Robert Browning. In the 1960s there was a trial in Germany of people who had been in a battalion, sort of military police, which had been used in the first years of World War II in Poland. They followed behind the advancing army and they had only one job -- kill the Jews in the villages. This was before the industrial machine of the Holocaust was set in motion. The Jews were simply found and shot dead. The incredible thing is that the Major who was commanding the battalion of about 300-400 people was a very particularly careful person. At the beginning of the operation he gathered his soldiers and said: "We are being given a terrible job" and he described it. Then he added: "If you don't think you can handle it, you can drop out". One or two said no, but all the others did it and during several months they killed thousands of men, women and children. They were not fervent Nazis. As a matter of fact, a lot of them came from Hamburg where the Left was very strong. They were working class people, ordinary policemen. Those who said no were just shifted to other tasks. So, why did they do it? They did not want to look bad with their comrades. They did not want to appear "chicken". They did not want to look as if they were not up to the terrible task. So, if we want to see what is the safety valve for moral behavior, it is not principle. If we had taken these people before this episode, if we had interviewed them, they would have been probably Christians, most of them going to church, most of them saying that being nice to people is so good and yet, when they were put to this test they became murderers. *The real safety valve is the capacity to say no.* I think this is the moral escape from horrifying situations in which you are being asked to do something against what supposedly are your principles. But, of course this

is something that has to be cultivated. Even in education, because conformity usually is taught in the family, in the school. One should be able to say no.

Let me introduce a personal note. My first posting was at Santiago, Chile. I was there when the coup d'etat took place on September 11, 1973 and stayed for a year after. Then I was in Russia for five years when it was the Soviet Union. More recently I was for five years in Tehran. I made fun of myself and I said I never met a dissident I did not like because what I have seen are people who have the courage to say no. They were not necessarily politically active; they were dissidents in the sense that they refused to do something against their principles. In Russian, there is the word "dissident", but the real Russian word is "the one who thinks differently". I think this is extremely important and, incidentally it is not only a moral, but also an intellectual position, because if you don't think differently you are not going to be a good scientist, a good nothing. If you think within the box, then forget it, you are just dead weight. I don't think even business needs people who cannot think differently. And if you want a vibrant economy, an economy capable of innovation which is the name of the game these days, we need people who think differently. The non-democratic attempts at forging societies create people who are not capable of saying no, but at the very end they are defeated. It took a little longer for the Russians, but it was revealed that conformity and the lack of individual initiative is disastrous in any case. So, I don't accept that those who reason in ethical terms are not realistic.

Let us talk about democracy. Democracy has its price. I don't have to tell you how difficult it is. I don't have to tell myself, as an Italian, that it is complicated and not always the best apparent solution. But non-democracy has a short span. Non-democracy has built in reasons for failure. They are also ethical because non-democracy does not really gather consensus. I was not a prophet, but I left Soviet Union in 1979 after 5 years and fortunately I wrote a few articles. I did not say that Soviet Union was going to be destroyed, but I did say that nobody believed in the ideology anymore. Nobody! I met dissidents, people who were indifferent, opportunists, but not one who believed what was written all over the place. Once I was speaking to a friend, a Soviet philosopher - who after his death has been recognized as the number one philosopher of that period. But in the mid-70s he was sitting at home: he had been the editor-in-chief of the

main Soviet philosophical journal, but then, since he was not a conformist, he was fired. I told him: "I go around Moscow and I see posters and banners: "Long live communism", "Lenin is with us" etc., but I don't think anybody believes that." He said "What do you think. We are stupid? Of course nobody believes that." So, I said "Why do they take all the trouble to put up those messages?" "It is so simple: so that there is no space for any other message. It is just covering ground even without really trying to convince anybody". That is definitely not the sign of a strong hegemony. As a matter of fact, even in the case of Iran, I am beginning to detect this loss of steam from an ideological point of view. It is difficult to say when this cultural and moral change can produce political results, because without political results people just sit at home, complain and don't believe anything. Of course, you know the best thing a non-democratic regime can do for the good of its own people is to enter a war and lose it. Francisco Franco, the dictator of Spain, being the astute man that he was, did not join World War II and he died peacefully in his bed in the 70s. Benito Mussolini made the mistake of joining the war and he died in 1945 shot by partisans. But if a dictator keeps out of conflicts it will take a very long time to topple him.

Let me conclude with what I think is the number one factor in violence. Fear! Absolute fear. First of all, slaughtering people is not natural. I don't have an ideal vision of the human being. We are capable of the best and the worst, but slaughtering people is not normal, it does not come naturally. So, normal people have to be made to overcome a certain restraint to become crazy enough to slaughter people. So, to snap that restraint there has first to be grievances, then propaganda and then all that I said about conformity, obedience and authority. Even then most people would not turn violent were it not for fear. One of the most horrendous things that happened at the end of the 20th century was the genocide in Rwanda. About a million people were cut to pieces. And in order to cut to pieces a million people you need a lot of people. There were no gas chambers or even soldiers. It was a very democratic genocide with a lot of popular participation. Now, were they all monsters? No, the Hutus had been convinced that the Tutsis were about to massacre them. I would like to quote literature because while usually essays (factual) are interesting, if you want to get to the deeper truth you have to read fiction and literature. There is a story by Kafka. It is called "The Burrow". In the burrow there is a being like a

mole that lives deep down underground in some little abode and listens to noises making him fear that predators are about to break into his den and kill him. So, Kafka describes this feeling of fear that is really overwhelming, that really distorts everything. Now, let me add. If somebody were to ask the mole: "Do you authorize us to go to the home of the predators and kill him, his children, and his wife, destroy the house? He would say: "Yes, please do it". The Kafkaesque mole of today has a TV and some channels are showing things that only breed fear. The problem is that the predator - which incidentally does exist and is not a figment of the imagination- is also moved by fear. Fundamentalists the world over (I am talking about all kinds because, unfortunately, all religions have produced them), fear that they are losing the battle, fear that modernity and an open society are advancing, that their children are not following the traditional precepts and something is weakening what they consider their own *raison d' etre* for their own identity. They are more fearful than the mole and therefore they are even more willing than the mole to use any sort of violence in order to stop what they perceive as a threat to their own deep cultural and religious identity and existence. Therefore, in terms of international politics, if you want to prevent conflicts, you have a very difficult job. First, we need the institutions, of course. We need to be able, for instance, to prevent conflicts, to have negotiations, peacekeeping. Some times it does work. Let me tell you because we just know the bad stories, we never hear about the stories of conflicts that were prevented. When my friends said: "Okay, you work in conflict prevention: how many conflicts have you prevented?" And I answered: "You will never know, because if I prevented a conflict you will not know about it". It is only a half joke. There have been situations in which certain potential conflicts have been stopped right at the beginning. At the same time we need cultural work because, though fear does not only come from ignorance, it has a lot to do with it. We really think that the others, our adversaries, have three heads and eat children raw. It is an old game that everybody has played, but maybe if somebody is a teacher or writes, it would be a good idea for him or her to say: "Okay, there are real reasons for conflict, we have real problems and we have real threats, but let us not have an imaginary adversary, let us not paint the adversary for what he is not". Besides, the distinction is always necessary. Even in the case of terrorism. If terrorists remain a core of fanatics and really capable of anything but have no link with normal people, no

political support, no understanding of what they are doing, no solidarity, it is technically very easy to defeat them.

I am talking about our own Italian experience. We had the Red Brigades. The Red Brigades presented themselves as the real communist party wanting to spearhead the revolution. Fortunately the communists and the labour unions did not respond to that appeal, so the Italian state was able to defeat them. But, if they had been able to make the linkage with a cause that was perceived by the majority, then we would have been in deep trouble. Addressing the root causes of terrorism is not an alternative to repression. If somebody points a weapon to shoot you, you just have to shoot before he does. The same for piracy! Why is there piracy? Because, for 20 years, we have allowed Somalia to become a black hole, a failed state. So, let us do something to reconstruct a state in Somalia and in the mean time let us shoot the pirates. These are two different things. Because otherwise we just have hawks and doves. "Let us kill them," says one and the other says "No, let us build a school in Somalia". It does not make any sense. I am definitely not blood thirsty, as you have understood. I am a rather peaceful person, but if somebody is armed and is pointing a gun at a hostage and if somebody shoots that person who is holding the gun, I shed no tears. I wish there were another solution, but there is none. But, in the meantime we could go on 20 years shooting and capturing pirates. If we don't address the root cause -- the non-existence of a State in Somalia--killing the pirates will not solve the problem. We have not done it; we have really abandoned them for so long -- all of us who could do something. Failed states are the most dangerous things on earth. A dictatorial state is not nice and it is dangerous, but a failed state is even more dangerous. If you have to choose between dictatorship and anarchy, then both for the citizen and for the system as a whole, I will say that anarchy is worse. And much as I dislike dictators, anarchy is really the end of humanity.

We have seen examples in Somalia, we have seen for a while what happened in West Africa, in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. In Sierra Leone, there was a time when they were cutting off the arms of people, and there were child soldiers. Since we have seen so many examples of a bad state, we cannot rush to the conclusion that no state is good. It would be very primitive thinking. I don't think we should do that because by now we have very clear examples.

Let me conclude, because I have spoken too much. As you see I mixed many disciplines, many approaches, but I think that is the only way of talking about international relations. It is not a technique, if it were only a technique I would have been so bored during these 40 years. It is like playing chess, which can be interesting, but I want to know who is playing. I want to know what the pawns are. I want to know why, not only what. I think, whatever our profession, we should always ask why and we should not ever claim [to be absolutely right]. Max Weber wrote that there are two kinds of ethics. One is the ethic of conviction: What is right is absolute. The other one is the ethic of responsibility and it means: "what happens if I do this or I don't?"

I think that in politics and in diplomacy this is the kind of ethic that we should apply, not that we are right in the absolute sense. There is an ancient Roman saying: "Let justice prevail even if the world should perish." That is not exactly humane, since we could have justice and at the same time a nice nuclear holocaust. I don't think it is really appealing. That is why I think we need the ethic of responsibility. I know there has been a lot of debate here about what to do after the terrorist attack in Mumbai, but let me say this is an opinion which is shared in my country and elsewhere that the ethic of responsibility was not to unleash a military response and this thinking prevailed in that city. It can be debated, but this is my personal opinion. It was an ethic of responsibility in practice which we should appreciate.