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### The International Dimension of ETA's Terrorism and the Internationalization of the Conflict in the Basque Country

Rogelio Alonso<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Public Law and Political Sciences, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain

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# The International Dimension of ETA's Terrorism and the Internationalization of the Conflict in the Basque Country

Rogelio Alonso

Department of Public Law and Political Sciences, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain

Since the 1960s Spain has suffered a terrorist campaign by ETA, a group that has espoused an ethnonationalist ideology with which it has justified terrorism in pursuit of its aims. ETA's campaign has also been marked by an international dimension. The international environment inspired many activists, and ETA has attempted to develop an international network of political and operational support throughout its campaign. International perceptions of ETA's violence have also decisively influenced its campaign in parallel with the evolution of the most recent wave of international terrorism. Therefore, this article will analyze the international sphere's influence upon ETA's strategy.

**Keywords:** Basque Conflict, ETA's Terrorism, Internationalization, Mediation

## ETA'S INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION FOR VIOLENCE

*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) formed in 1958 in the context of General Francisco Franco's dictatorship in Spain, and claimed its first killing in 1960. Franco's regime lasted from 1939 until 1975 and featured a democratic deficit that led some Basque nationalists to demand a violent response against the Spanish authorities. Up until the late 1950s nationalist grievances in the Basque Country had been mainly channelled through the Basque Nationalist Party (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, PNV), a party set up in 1895. However, at the end of the 1950s a group of nationalist youths critical of PNV's approach toward Franco's dictatorship set up a new organization named ETA, with the aim of increasing nationalist opposition against the regime. Although ETA has

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Address correspondence to Rogelio Alonso, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Campus de Vicalvaro, Paseo de los Artilleros s/n, Madrid 28032, Spain. E-mail: rogelio.alonso@urjc.es

committed terrorist attacks since its formation, it was not until 1968 that the group deliberately took the decision to carry out assassinations as part of its terrorist campaign. After decades of violence, today ETA is responsible for the death of 858 individuals and many more casualties.<sup>1</sup>

ETA's decision to step up its campaign in 1968 was a result of the combination of several factors. These factors were, primarily, a nationalist extremist ideology; Franco's repression together with the cycle of action-repression that it triggered; and several violent struggles that served as external referents for the group.

The long historic tradition of the extremist ideology embraced by Basque nationalists became the basis on which the terrorist group would justify its evolution toward an intense campaign of killings. Influenced by leftist ideals and the international context at a time of global unrest and protest movements throughout the world, ETA constituted, above all, a radicalized expression of Basque ethnic nationalism.<sup>2</sup> The nationalist ideology espoused by ETA facilitated mobilization by enabling individuals to join together around a set of beliefs that contributed to consolidating violent ideas and attitudes.

Basque nationalism bears a tradition of violence that operated as a societal and cultural facilitator for terrorism. The myths, legends, customs, and habits related to this nationalist ideology sanctioned the use of violence against political adversaries as represented not only by the Spanish government but also by Basque citizens not considered nationalists. Consequently, Basque nationalism generated a subculture of violence that introduced and reaffirmed absolutist convictions, and their attendant fanaticism provided further moral and political justification for terrorist acts.

The escalation of violence was achieved by portraying the Basque population as a bellicose people who fiercely resisted any of the attempts made throughout centuries and even millennia to invade or conquer the territories they inhabited. Basque separatist terrorists thus tended to see themselves as contemporary *gudaris*, or indigenous warriors carrying on the same rebellious and uncompromising disposition of their ancestors.<sup>3</sup> This ideology was complemented by several external referents where violent subversion was taking place, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of violence among Basque nationalists.

At the end of the 1960s the international political environment provided inspiration for many ETA activists and other terrorist groups active in Europe like the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Red Brigades, and the *Baader Meinhof*.<sup>4</sup> This legacy, in addition to the perception of other national liberation struggles that had been successfully fought around the world, provided a firm basis for some young people's decision to join ETA. In the early 1960s, resorting to terrorism was becoming a more attractive option for Basque nationalists who had learned how other groups' use of violence had proved useful. For example, the Zionist paramilitary group, *Irgun*, was seen by some ETA leaders as a reference, since attacks like the one against Jerusalem's King David

Hotel in 1948 provided inspiration for a more symbolic target selection. The *Irgun* was depicted by ETA leaders as a small movement that only consisted of 20 or 40 members that confronted a well-armed and disciplined British Army. Similarly, the ETA leader Txabi Echebarrieta encouraged members to “take the[ir] head[s] out of the sand and look around” so they could see how a “Free Ireland” had been achieved using violent means.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the repression applied by Franco’s dictatorship both in the Basque region and other areas of the country helped Basque nationalism to be seen by a sector of the population as an ideology under attack.<sup>6</sup> The experience and perception of injustice and alienation by the citizens of this region enhanced the appeal of Basque nationalism and the need to protect and strengthen it. In the early 1960s the violent cycle of action-repression set the ground for an escalation like the one that would soon commence. The police repression applied at the time did manage to considerably weaken the feeble infrastructure that ETA was trying to build. Although this repression weakened ETA’s military capacity, it also contributed to the group’s increased radicalization. It was in this context that ETA’s leaders attempted to promote their “revolutionary war,” which also took inspiration from foreign struggles.

The regime’s repression toughened in the aftermath of ETA’s first killings, with most of ETA’s leadership facing military tribunal in December 1970. Nine ETA members were sentenced to death in the 1970 “*Consejo de Burgos*,” as this trial became known. The trial provoked widespread solidarity among the Basque population, along with a wave of international sympathy. Such a response by the State provided increased national and international legitimacy for the violence that ETA was perpetrating. It was in fact the international pressure that convinced Franco to commute the death sentences, given the additional negative international publicity that an already decadent regime would receive if the inmates were executed.

It was in this context that ETA carried out a successful terrorist attack that also managed to boost its international support. On December 20, 1973, Luis Carrero Blanco, then President of the Spanish Government, was murdered by ETA in a spectacular terrorist attack that amplified ETA’s image abroad. Carrero was regarded as a key person within the State’s apparatus and it was assumed that he would play a significant role during the Spanish transition, which appeared to be imminent given Franco’s age and infirmity. The prominent profile of the target and the way in which the attack was carried out—after digging a tunnel the terrorists managed to hide a large amount of explosives underneath the road after Carrero’s attendance at mass in the center of Madrid, and through which the politicians drove every day—attracted massive international media attention and considerable sympathy, the latter having already been significant in the aftermath of the Burgos Trial.

In 1990 ETA’s leadership praised Carrero’s killing. ETA stressed the importance of such an attack, drawing an “advantageous comparison” with

international liberation struggles that were regarded as much more legitimate than ETA's: "We cannot forget that Gandhi's struggle was not enough for India to achieve its independence. Without the efforts of nationalist armed organizations at the time India would have not achieved what the country finally achieved. In the same way, Carrero would have not disappeared had it not been for the sacrifices of ETA's militants."<sup>7</sup>

As this reference illustrates, international conflicts and relevant figures have been a constant feature in ETA's propaganda as a source legitimization for the group's terrorist campaign. This international appeal has been complemented by the group's intense efforts aimed at developing international solidarity and support through a network of contacts with various terrorist groups throughout the world, as the following section will analyze.

## ETA'S NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

Since the 1970s ETA has included within its organizational structure what has been termed as an "international department." This body has been in charge of developing contacts with other terrorist organizations and international institutions.<sup>8</sup> The development of these contacts coincided with the international notoriety ETA gained from the Burgos Trial. Intense contacts were maintained with other terrorist groups between 1971 and 1974 with the aim of exchanging experiences, knowledge, and weapons, including on some occasions the signing of joint declarations.

In 1971 ETA, the IRA, and The Liberation Front of Brittany (*Front de Libération de la Bretagne*, FLB) signed a joint communiqué coinciding with the annual May Day celebrations.<sup>9</sup> One year later, these groups expressed their joint opposition to the European Common Market.<sup>10</sup> Also in 1972, ETA signed with 12 different groups, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a statement lending support to the IRA. In September 1973, ETA and the IRA signed a new declaration reaffirming their determination to strengthen their bonds.<sup>11</sup> Public declarations had become less common after the split in the IRA between the Officials and the Provisionals. Nonetheless, contacts between the two groups were maintained, gradually increasing the contacts between their respective political wings.<sup>12</sup>

Over the years the relationship between ETA and the IRA has gone through different stages, with ETA sympathizers sheltering IRA members on the run during certain periods.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Ignacio de Juana Chaos, a leading ETA terrorist, benefited from the network of contacts developed between the two organizations and moved to Northern Ireland in 2008 following the controversy generated by his release from prison. In 2010 de Juana Chaos fled Northern Ireland and went into hiding, refusing to accept the request by the Spanish National Court to give testimony before a tribunal over allegations that he praised terrorism in a letter read in his name at a rally.

In 2002 it was claimed that of a total of 28 members of *Jarraí*, ETA's youth wing, who had previously visited Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, in Derry, Northern Ireland, 23 had been subsequently arrested on terrorist charges, several of them in France.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the 1990s political advice from Sinn Féin and the IRA was sought by the leadership of ETA and its political wing, *Batasuna*.<sup>15</sup> Prior to this the IRA's historical experiences had also helped ETA to create one of the group's first manuals on security procedures. As early as 1971 Seán Mac Stíofáin, the IRA's Chief of Staff, met ETA representatives who offered the IRA leader some guns in return for training in the use of explosives.<sup>16</sup> At the end of the 1970s, ETA activists went to Kerry in the Republic of Ireland, where they were trained in the use of mortars.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the obvious differences between the root causes and consequences of the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, both ETA and the IRA have fostered some ideological and operational affinity. To this extent, José Antonio Urrutikoetxea, one of the main leaders of ETA, defined the IRA as "a reference": "For me it is normal that the movements of national liberation, wherever they are in Ireland, Colombia or Corsica, should work together, put their experience in common and help each other—why not?"<sup>18</sup> In a similar vein, throughout the years ETA has also set up contacts with left wing terrorist organizations like the German *Baader Meinhof*, the Italian Red Brigades, the Chilean Revolutionary Left Movement (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*, MIR), the *Tupamaros* in Uruguay, the *Sandinistas* in Nicaragua, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), and various other violent groups in El Salvador, Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba. In 2007, the trial of terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, known internationally as "Carlos the Jackal," confirmed that he maintained "regular operational" connections with one of ETA's factions (ETA *político-militar*) at the beginning of the 1980s. This relationship was supported by the Communist secret services of East Germany, Hungary, and Romania.<sup>19</sup>

ETA's international dimension also manifested itself in the presence of activists in training camps located in Algeria, Lebanon, and Yemen during the 1970s. The Algerian war of independence constituted a colonial model that ETA used in order to place its terrorist campaign against a democratic regime in a different and more legitimate framework. The way in which the Algerian National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale*, FLN) conducted negotiations with the French authorities also inspired ETA. This appeal was complemented by the aid provided to ETA by the Algerian government as a response to the Spanish authorities' attitude toward the conflict in the Western Sahara. In 1976, over 60 members of ETA received military, physical, and communications training at the police academy in Souma, and further training was provided at an Algerian military base in 1984. Despite the generous support received throughout this period, the Algerian regime would finally

expel ETA's activists from the country following the failure of the negotiations in 1989 between the terrorist group and representatives of the Spanish government.<sup>20</sup>

Lebanon and Yemen were also favorite destinations for the training of ETA militants who traveled to these countries on several occasions between 1979 and 1980. Some of the training was arranged by various Palestinian factions such as *Al Fatah* and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The relevance of these experiences was summed up as follows by a former Head of the Spanish intelligence service: "Rather than in the operational knowledge acquired the main importance of these courses lays in the psychological motivation and international contacts they provide to the organisation."<sup>21</sup>

South America has been another area where ETA has developed a strong support network. Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Panama, and the Dominican Republic have hosted ETA activists since the mid 1980s.<sup>22</sup> Although some of those who settled in those countries did so after moving away from the terrorist group, others were hiding from the Spanish authorities. During the 1990s the Mexican government changed its position on ETA's activists and started to extradite some of them to Spain. Nonetheless, ETA has continued to finance itself through businesses set up in Latin American countries.<sup>23</sup> Colombia's terrorist groups have also been welcoming ETA members until very recently. This was the point made by a judicial report produced by magistrate Eloy Velasco at the Spanish National Court in 2010. The report claimed that Venezuela had sheltered ETA members, enabling the relationship between the Basque terrorist group and the FARC.<sup>24</sup> The computer files of deceased FARC leader Raúl Reyes also demonstrated the extent of the connections developed by the Basque and Colombian terrorist groups over the years, confirming that both the FARC and ETA have cooperated on numerous occasions.

## INTERNATIONALIZING THE CONFLICT: LOOKING FOR EXTERNAL LEGITIMIZATION

The activities of ETA's so-called "international department" have overlapped with those of *Batasuna*, the political party that has developed under its auspices. It has been judicially demonstrated that *Batasuna* constitutes a part of the network of organizations ultimately led by ETA, confirming that ETA and *Batasuna* have shared objectives and membership.<sup>25</sup> The Spanish State's awareness of ETA's multifaceted structure led to the banning of *Batasuna* in 2002.<sup>26</sup> Under these circumstances a great deal of ETA and *Batasuna*'s external actions in subsequent years have been aimed at gathering international support against this antiterrorist initiative, which has considerably damaged ETA's efficiency. Previously, ETA had already devoted a significant amount of effort in the search for the "internationalization" of the conflict. To this end

ETA has been constantly looking for the support of international figures by portraying a biased and manipulated interpretation of the conflict.<sup>27</sup> Specifically, ETA has denounced the alleged denial of political and civil rights in the Basque Country, the systematic practice of torture, and the lack of democracy in Spain.

Therefore, ETA's propaganda has also been oriented toward international public opinion in an attempt to disguise the reality of the terrorist threat. As the 2001 Report produced by the Council of Europe Commissioner's for Human Rights put it, ETA systematically violates human rights through its campaign of assassinations, kidnapping, threats, harassment, and extortion activities.<sup>28</sup> Accusations that detainees held on suspicion of terrorist offenses have been tortured by state agents have continued over the years. Most of these accusations have proved to be unfounded, originating in ETA's own internal documents, wherein it instructed its activists to systematically claim torture when arrested.<sup>29</sup> The United Nations Special Rapporteur, Theo van Boven, concluded in 2004 that torture or maltreatment of prisoners in Spain is not a systematic practice. He observed, however, that the system made torture possible, particularly the practice of *incommunicado* detention, and recommended the recording of the interrogation of detainees to prevent any infringement of their rights.<sup>30</sup> Police trade unions, however, have frequently rejected such a practice, as the disclosure of their identity would seriously endanger their work and put their lives at risk.<sup>31</sup>

In the search for the "internationalization" of the conflict, ETA has also demanded the involvement of international mediators that could put the terrorist campaign on the same level as the legitimate actions of a democratic state like Spain. Spanish authorities have accepted on several occasions the engagement of international mediators. In 1995, following ETA's requests, Argentinean Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, winner of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize, liaised with the Spanish government and the terrorist group. The unsuccessful efforts to end violence were followed by another failed and short-lived engagement of the Carter Foundation.<sup>32</sup> In spite of the legitimization that ETA would extract from the acceptance of international mediators in its negotiations with the Spanish government, the latter agreed to the participation of the Henri Dunant Centre, based in Geneva, in the period before and after the March 2006 truce.<sup>33</sup> ETA's attempts to garner legitimacy via a strategy of "internationalization" met with further success when in October 2006 the European Parliament narrowly endorsed the "peace initiative in the Basque Country."<sup>34</sup> The negative role of the third-party intervention in the Basque Country has continued until very recently, as will be demonstrated below.

## THE DISTORTION OF THE IRISH MIRROR

The international dimension of ETA's terrorism can also be appreciated in the impact that events in Northern Ireland during the past decade have had on



ETA's strategy vis-à-vis negotiations with democratic players.<sup>35</sup> Nationalist politicians in the Basque Country have regarded Northern Ireland's so-called peace process as a model for resolving the conflict in the Spanish region. The search for a similar strategy toward peace in the Basque Country, however, has been characterized by a distortion of the Irish model. This erroneous interpretation is based on two erroneous assumptions: that the formation of a pan-nationalist front offered the republican movement (the IRA and Sinn Féin) an alternative through which it could achieve their objectives and compensate for weakness in their electoral and social support and that the IRA's cessation of violence was a direct consequence of the British and Irish government's recognition of the right to self-determination.<sup>36</sup> Basque nationalists and ETA ignored the fact that the peace process had required the republicans to swallow very "bitter pills"<sup>37</sup> and an end to their terrorism campaign without the achievement of the aims used to justify their violence.<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, ETA has repeatedly pointed to the Northern Irish context as proof that the Spanish government must engage in negotiations with a terrorist organization.<sup>39</sup> However, ETA's continued maximalist demands have ignored the warnings of Sinn Féin politicians, who in the late 1990s had recommended that *Batasuna* be "realistic" about what could be achieved in such a process.<sup>40</sup> ETA and *Batasuna* were particularly eager to copy the successful "internationalization" of the conflict achieved by Sinn Féin. Former US Senator George Mitchell had been the chair of the talks that culminated in the Belfast Agreement signed in April 1998.<sup>41</sup> In addition to co-chairing the talks, former Finnish Prime Minister Harri Holkeri also formed part of the original commission charged with planning the IRA's decommissioning. Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and African National Congress (ANC) member Cyril Ramaphosa were to become independent arms inspectors.<sup>42</sup> Other international involvement included retired Canadian General John de Chastelain, appointed Chairman of the International Commission on Decommissioning, and its two other members, Brigadier General Tauno Nieminen from Finland and Andrew Sens, a US diplomat who had acted as senior foreign and defense policy aide to President Clinton. The latter had also been a very active player in the process that led to the Belfast Agreement, granting Gerry Adams a visa in 1994 and welcoming the IRA leader on various occasions to the White House.

The prominence of these figures allowed the IRA to present itself as a real army signing an armistice rather than as a terrorist group that had pursued its objectives through violence and intimidation against the will of the majority of the Irish people. This was one of the reasons why ETA sought a similar internationalization during the negotiation process with the Spanish government between 2004 and 2007. As ETA demanded, based on the Northern Ireland model, the Spanish government used the Henri Dunant Centre in the negotiations to supervise meetings between itself and ETA.<sup>43</sup>

According to some sources, officials from other European countries also took part in these negotiations.<sup>44</sup>

The results and the nature international figures' involvement in Northern Ireland provided inspiration to ETA and *Batasuna* during its negotiations with the Spanish Government between 2004 and 2007. ETA was applying the same dynamic that Sinn Féin had previously used. During the process that led to the signing of the Belfast Agreement in April 1998, South Africa was used as a positive model by Sinn Féin politicians, eager to compare the IRA terrorist campaign with the ANC's violent struggle to put an end to apartheid.<sup>45</sup> The IRA and Sinn Féin have frequently compared the situation in Northern Ireland with South African apartheid and the racism experienced in the southern states during the pre-Civil Rights era in the United States. Neither of these comparisons stands up to serious analysis.<sup>46</sup> In a similar vein, ETA and *Batasuna* have also denounced Spanish democracy as an "apartheid" system. Such denunciations also formed part of ETA's strategy of internationalization and served as a useful propaganda tool, reflecting what former Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald said about the IRA and Sinn Féin: "Their propaganda system is very focused. 'We are the peace party.' If you murder enough people and then stop, then you become the peace party."<sup>47</sup>

Efforts to draw comparisons with the Northern Ireland peace process have continued until recently with the active involvement of South African lawyer Brian Currin. His shallow knowledge of the Basque conflict, evident in most of his statements,<sup>48</sup> is complemented with his undeniable association with *Batasuna's* agenda. Such a stance should clearly invalidate his self-proclaimed neutral and independent role as a bona fide third-party, but Currin has continued to lobby in support for the terrorist group's agenda. To this end, in 2010 he dubiously compared ETA's violence with the alleged "violent" response of the Spanish state to ETA's terrorism in the form of absolutely legal measures such as the banning of *Batasuna*. It has to be stressed that the banning of ETA's political wing has been validated by the European Human Rights Tribunal in a historic ruling that stresses the unacceptable threat that *Batasuna* poses to democracy.<sup>49</sup>

Irrespective of this ruling, Currin has attacked the Spanish government for its ban of *Batasuna*, depicting such a legal and efficient initiative as "not a very democratic measure" introduced by a State that "abuses its power in order to destroy a legitimate position with which it is not prepared to enter into dialogue."<sup>50</sup> The inaccurate description of Spanish democracy that undergirds such a view has been complemented by Currin's demands for the banning of *Batasuna* to be abandoned given the party's acceptance of the so-called "Mitchell principles."<sup>51</sup> Thus, Currin pretends to circumvent Spanish and European legality with formalities, such as the mere adherence to a generic commitment to democratic and nonviolent principles, such as the eponymous

ones former US Senator George Mitchell created in order to accept parties linked to terrorist organizations in the Northern Ireland talks process.<sup>52</sup> Such an approach constitutes another distortion of the procedures used in Northern Ireland in an attempt to inappropriately extrapolate some of them to a completely different context.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS: OBSTACLES IN THE WAY TO PEACE

Under the circumstances that have been described, acceptance of international mediators by the Spanish government and the major Basque nationalist parties proved to be counterproductive during the negotiations held between 2004 and 2007. The involvement of so-called mediators is a constant demand by ETA's political wing, as it is aware of the beneficial effects stemming from this foreign intervention. Many such mediators underestimate the differential factors that distinguish ETA's terrorism from the violence perpetrated in other international conflicts where negotiations between the state and armed opposition have taken place. Consequently, an erroneous analysis of this type of dialogue often emerges.<sup>53</sup> This has been enhanced by the involvement of so-called international mediators who have homogenized the common denominator present in several conflicts—violence—and undervalued the many distinctive factors that require particular consideration. Thus, the causes behind the violence are distorted in order to justify common responses despite the inadequacy of such generalizations, evidenced by the differential variables alluded to and which will be explained below.

First, the democratization process put in place by the Spanish government after Franco's death redressed the democratic deficit that had given ETA's violence an aura of legitimacy in the view of some parts of society. In the Basque Country, the reformation of state institutions and the consolidation of democracy resulted in a broad, autonomous political system that has been controlled by nationalists since its inception.

Second, as progress was made in democratization, popular support for violence decreased; nowadays, violence attracts support among only a small minority of the population in the Basque Country. Basque citizens reject ETA more strongly year after year.<sup>54</sup> This has been the majority view even among those who voted for ETA's political wing, *Batasuna*. This is a significant shift: in 1978, nearly half of Basque adults interviewed in public opinion surveys had described ETA members as patriots or idealists, and just 7% called them common criminals. In contrast, as early as 1989, less than one-quarter of Basque citizens referred to them in any favorable terms, and more than twice as many as in 1978 viewed members of ETA simply as criminals.<sup>55</sup> Public opinion toward ETA has continued on this negative trajectory until the present day.<sup>56</sup>

Third, contrary to what can be appreciated in other international contexts, in the Basque Country terrorism has mainly emanated from one

source: ETA.<sup>57</sup> As regards another European liberal democracy like the United Kingdom, although the IRA has been responsible for the highest percentage of the killings committed in Northern Ireland, terrorism has also been perpetrated by other groups on the unionist side. Additionally, the allegations of collusion between security agencies and unionist terrorist groups continue to mire the record of the British state's antiterrorist policy in Northern Ireland.<sup>58</sup> If the comparison is drawn with other international contexts where mediators have worked, another key difference emerges, since in many of those areas the State, rather than a non-state actor like ETA, is the main perpetrator of violence.

Fourth, under the circumstances outlined above, and unlike other international scenarios where violent conflicts have occurred, government negotiations with ETA undermine the political framework of democracy. The Basque Country has a democratic framework within which dialogue among democratic players can and must take place. Negotiations with those who violently defy it weaken the position of those who respect the law and rewards and encourages those who oppose it. Therefore, contrary to the view put forward by some mediators, ETA has had, and does have, an alternative to violence. The acceptance of negotiations and the refusal to accept an already extant democratic framework that such a course implies sends the opposite message.

## THE BIASED ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS

Mediators have often been presented as experts whose opinions would be of great value in resolving the Basque conflict. Their views have been regarded as more important and authoritative than the ones of those who have directly suffered ETA's violence and intimidation. The propaganda used in order to justify negotiations with ETA and the involvement of mediators have insisted on the need for "neutral" observers, thus devising an impossible neutrality between victims and aggressors. However, the democratic context in which ETA's terrorism is perpetrated makes it impossible for the mediator to claim impartiality.

"Peacemakers, by definition, are impartial without being fair; it is not their task to make moral distinctions between aggressor and victim. Peacemakers also, by their very presence on a demarcation line, effectively ratify the conquests of aggressors and impede attempts by victims to recapture lost ground."<sup>59</sup> This statement by Michael Ignatieff serves to expose the mistakes often committed by persons offering themselves as "experts" in "conflict resolution" and peace processes. This statement is applicable to those who defended a peace process for the Basque Country based on the experience of foreign intervention in other contexts; however, the applicability of these contexts to the Basque Country are highly questionable given the unique features that characterize the conflict in this region.<sup>60</sup>

This attitude was very evident during the process of negotiation between ETA and the Spanish government between 2004 and 2007, which allowed ETA to create a context in which responsibility for the conflict was diffused and guilt was transferred to other democratic players. This dynamic was reinforced by some of the mediators involved in the conflict. They ignored the fact that ETA is the main “spoiler” in the attempts to build a process that would lead to the resolution of the conflict, since the main premise for such a task, the willingness to put an end to terrorism, has always been absent from ETA's motivations for engaging in negotiations. Father Alec Reid, one of these international players who openly endorsed ETA's agenda, went so far as to explicitly state that the main opposition party (the *Partido Popular*), obviously a democratic party, was “the main obstacle toward peace,”<sup>61</sup> thus releasing ETA from its obvious and exclusive responsibility for the violence perpetrated.

That was also the logical conclusion that could be derived from other third-party interventions in the Basque Country in the last decade, for example, the Permanent Group of International Advisors on the Peace Process formed at the behest of Juan José Ibarretxe, the Basque regional president between 1999 and 2009. The group was formed by Roelf Meyer, former South African Defence Minister; Albert Reynolds, former Prime Minister of Ireland; Andrea Bartoli, head of the Center for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University; Harry Barnes, former Head of the Conflict Resolution Department at the Carter Center; and Joanna Weschler, the UN Representative for Human Rights Watch.

Ibarretxe created this group in order to have a nationalist political view validated by the opinions of observers that were profoundly unfamiliar with terrorism in the Basque Country. In doing so, institutional nationalism sought in this way to give legitimacy to political negotiations with the terrorist organization, disguising the harmful compromise of rights and freedoms of such a proposal in the context of the Basque Country as an innocuous dialogue based on a generic conflict resolution model supported by “experts.”

Irrespective of the important differences that can be discerned between terrorism in the Basque Country and other contexts abroad, international experiences of violent conflicts were constantly used in support of the peace process with ETA since the late 1990s. The Spanish media also sought to justify the Spanish government's negotiations with ETA between 2004 and 2007 by drawing parallels with other conflicts, as highlighted in a number of articles published in *El País*, one of the most popular and influential newspapers in the country. Two articles published on December 10 and 11, 2006 represented a microcosm of the approaches called for by self-proclaimed “professional mediators” in the Basque Country, revealing a broad and disquieting lack of knowledge of the terrorism in Spain that could hardly facilitate the conclusion of ETA's campaign.

The testimony of the Permanent Group of International Advisors on the Peace Process was used literally to demand a “political price” and “concessions” from the Spanish Government to ETA. They did this by calling for “universal rules” applicable to “all peace processes” on which they justified their opinions, despite the evident differences among such cases. This bold assumption was a serious mistake that distorted the group’s later arguments, since the exceptional nature of ETA’s terrorism made any such generalization impossible.

As mentioned above, with the democratic process put into place after the demise of the Franco regime, Spanish democracy has remedied the grievances that granted ETA a modicum of legitimacy in the same sections of society in the early stages of its campaign. In a region that for three decades now has been governed by nationalists, the consolidation of democratic institutions repaired the democratic deficit that for some justified the violence that has become increasingly more rejected by the Basque people to the point that nowadays explicit outright support for ETA has virtually disappeared among the Basque citizens and even among ETA’s political constituency.

Under these circumstances it is very harmful to assume that the integration of an antisystem element should require changing the rules that achieved this drop in support for terrorism. The development of the democratic framework and the need to defend its legitimacy has completely conditioned policies regarding ETA, thus making it impossible to equate the situation in Spain with any of the contexts in which the aforementioned mediators define themselves as being “experts.” This is doubly true because ETA’s terrorism has not been countered with a violent response from a society that, despite suffering and provocation, has always avoided revenge and entrusted its security and its demand for justice to the State.

While the mediators were overlooking these absolutely crucial differentiating features, they also seemed to be unaware that legal and political impunity for the violators of human rights had not brought genuine peace in the contexts in which they had been imposed. Academics who have analyzed peace processes in Latin America have concluded that justice based on punishment of the perpetrators of violence was a necessary, but often overlooked, requirement for the successful resolution of brutal conflicts.<sup>62</sup> This principle remains even more appropriate to apply to the Spanish context where a just political system has been in existence for decades now.

ETA’s propaganda front has constantly sought legitimacy through rhetoric very similar to the one articulated by international “experts” in peace processes. Revealingly, only weeks before the terrorist group killed two people after planting a huge bomb at Madrid’s international airport on December 30, 2006, the aforementioned “experts” used the same ETA terminology, arguing that “the process would putrefy” if terrorists were not offered “concessions.”

These were the exact terms used in the above mentioned articles published in December 2006 in *El País*, a newspaper that supported the Government's negotiations with ETA. Significantly, these precise terms were also used by the daily *Gara*, a newspaper that is close to the ETA sympathizer community, as an authoritative argument to justify the ETA's breaking of its truce.<sup>63</sup> The newspaper used these articles published in *El País* to explain the terrorists' response as a reasonable one, since the government had not made sufficient progress in relation to its demands for impunity, demands which were supported by the "experts" in "conflict resolution."<sup>64</sup>

Statements by interlocutors that have presented themselves as mediators by and large exempted ETA from the main responsibility in the resolution of a conflict that in reality was shown to emanate fundamentally from the existence of a terrorist organization that uses coercion to condition the lives of individuals and the political process. This interpretation of reality applies the same mechanisms of diffusion of responsibility and guilt transfer as has been used by the terrorist organization for decades. Neither was the logic offered by one of *Batasuna's* representatives very different when he stated that "here there is a political class that is not interested in resolving the conflict" after accusing the democratic parties of "spitting" at ETA when the group had said that "it wanted to put an end to the war."<sup>65</sup> It was inferred from all this that those who did not endorse the model the terrorist group was seeking to impose should be seen as "enemies" and "obstructors of peace," despite being the direct victims of the terrorist threat.

These expressions were also skilfully used by IRA and Sinn Féin leaders such as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. When voices were raised in Northern Ireland stating that the truly damaging thing for peace was to accept it as essential that not all the players play by the same democratic rules, claiming that the use of violence resulted in benefits that true democrats did not enjoy, they were often met with criticism from individuals accusing them of obstructing the road to peace. Therefore, when the IRA broke its ceasefire in 1996 some politicians and journalists blamed it on the British Prime Minister at the time, John Major. The same thing happened with IRA disarmament, when those making such a reasonable demand were branded as "enemies of peace."

Therefore, through the resort to third-party intervention, efforts have been made in the Basque Country under the pretext of seeking peace to consolidate positions that overlook the fact that ETA has systematically violated human rights in a democratic state. Experience demonstrates that ETA is keen on guaranteeing third-party intervention, because this type of involvement offers the terrorist group an opportunity to obtain some legitimacy they seek to achieve by reproducing their version of the conflict and imposing the way it is supposed to be resolved.

## CONCLUSIONS

The international dimension of ETA's terrorism has existed from the beginning of its campaign. The inspiration that other international struggles provided to ETA's ideology and to its activists was a key factor in the group's evolution during its early days. Throughout its history the Basque terrorist group has developed networks of contacts and alliances with other terrorist organizations, extending their activities throughout a significant number of countries and regions. As many of those organizations moved away from violence, ETA has also distanced itself from these groups, as continued solidarity had the potential to delegitimize ETA's continued use of violence. ETA's more recent patterns of internationalization point in the direction of the involvement of international figures in the Basque conflict, which the terrorist organization hopes will advance its agenda. At a time of considerable weakness for the organization, ETA hopes that the interference of third-party intervention will introduce a destabilizing factor that would mitigate the very effective pressure that the State is applying against the organization.

Previous experiences of mediation between a democratic state like Spain and a terrorist organization like ETA has proved to be extremely biased and unhelpful since it has managed to put both actors on the same level. Clearly, a terrorist organization that systematically violates human rights should not be seen as equally responsible for the end of its violence as the State that suffers this terrorism. Very often, the narrative put forward by so-called mediators has developed a distorted narrative of the conflict that matches ETA's propaganda, since it argues that both ETA and the State are using violence and all types of violence should cease in order to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict. This kind of argument confuses the legitimate monopoly of violence that a democratic state holds with the illegal violence used by a terrorist group that tries to impose its political objectives through the use of terrorism.

ETA's decline has seen an intensification of efforts by ETA's political wing, *Batasuna*, to increase the involvement of international players in the Basque conflict with the aim of setting up favorable conditions for a negotiation between the State and the terrorist group. As recently as March 2010, *Batasuna* managed to gather international support for the signing of the so-called Brussels Declaration. The statement, signed by several recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, asked ETA to declare a ceasefire. In doing so, however, it demanded an "appropriate response" from the Spanish government to the hypothetical cessation that would advance "new political and democratic efforts," making "the resolution of antagonisms and the achievement of a lasting peace possible." Not only were the Declaration's signatories placing an unfair burden upon the Spanish government by obscuring ETA's primary responsibility for the resolution of the conflict, but, furthermore,



the signatories supported *Batasuna's* deceitful tactics, presenting the political wing of the terrorist group as a party "committed to exclusively political and peaceful means." Contrary to such a wrong assessment of *Batasuna's* nature and intentions, Spanish and European legislation still consider the party to be an illegal organization integrally linked to ETA.

The protracted Spanish antiterrorist experience demonstrates that the termination of ETA's campaign is possible without negotiations with the terrorist group. In fact, the lessons learned during the long fight against ETA, which includes many episodes of failed negotiations, consistently reveal that negotiations do not deter ETA from violence. Negotiations are a counterproductive policy that is interpreted by the terrorist group as a vindication of its strategy, since it demonstrates how efficient terrorism can be in forcing a democratic state to depart from the institutions that democracy offers for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Therefore, an internationalization of the Basque conflict with the involvement of international players that ignores such a key premise is bound to fail in achieving the total disappearance of ETA's threatening presence, which is the first and most important precondition for a resolution of the terrorist conflict in the Basque Country.

## NOTES

1. For an analysis of all of ETA's victims and its patterns of victimization and target selection throughout its terrorist campaign, see Rogelio Alonso, Florencio Domínguez, and Marcos García Rey, *Vidas rotas. Historia de los hombres, mujeres y niños víctimas de ETA* (Madrid: Espasa, 2010).
2. On the history of ETA, see Florencio Domínguez, *De la negociación a la tregua: El final de ETA?* (Madrid: Taurus, 1998); Florencio Domínguez, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa y Actuaciones 1978–1992* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1998); Antonio Elorza et al., *La historia de ETA* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy; Garmendia, 2006); José María Garmendia, *Historia de ETA. Volume I* (San Sebastián: Aramburu, 1979); José María Garmendia, *Historia de ETA. Volume II* (San Sebastián: Aramburu, 1980); Patxo Unzueta, *Los nietos de la ira. Nacionalismo y violencia en el País Vasco* (Madrid: El País-Aguilar, 1998).
3. Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State: Basque Terrorism," in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 410–469, 419–423.
4. See, on this issue, the motivations provided by some IRA and ETA activists in Rogelio Alonso, *The IRA and Armed Struggle* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); and Fernando Reinares, *Patriotas de la muerte. Quienes han militado en ETA y por qué* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001).
5. José María Garmendia, "ETA: Nacimiento, desarrollo y crisis (1959–1978)," in Antonio Elorza et al., *La historia de ETA*, 77–102, 99–100.
6. Shabad and Llera Ramo, "Political Violence in a Democratic State," 419–423.
7. Statement by ETA's leadership published in *Egin* on October 12, 1990.
8. Some of the activities of this department are analyzed in Florencio Domínguez, *Josu Ternera. Una vida en ETA* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2006), 89–129. For

an excellent and very thorough analysis of the activities carried by this department in Latin America, see Florencio Domínguez, *Las conexiones de ETA en América* (Madrid: RBA, 2010).

9. *Zutik* 63, published in *Documentos Y*, vol. 12, 351.

10. *Documentos Y*, vol. 12, 396.

11. *Hautsi*, no. 2, September–October 1973, in *Documentos Y*, vol. 16, 447–448.

12. This has been the case in spite of the opinion of ETA leaders like José Luis Álvarez Emparantza. This founding member of ETA saw the IRA as “the armed wing of the Irish nationalist right,” as opposed to the INLA (Irish National Liberation Army), a splinter group from the main IRA formed in the 1970s, which was regarded by Álvarez as more similar to the Basque terrorist group. Domínguez, *ETA: Estrategia Organizativa y Actuaciones*, 115.

13. Interviews with IRA members conducted by the author, Belfast and Derry, January 2000 and March 2002.

14. Brian Walker, “Web of Terror: The Blame in Spain,” *Belfast Telegraph*, May 22, 2002.

15. Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin and a key IRA leader since the 1970s, has paid several visits to the Basque Country. Other Sinn Féin politicians have also endorsed some of *Batasuna*’s initiatives, such as Alex Maskey’s presence in the Basque Country at the launch of an official document in January 2002.

16. Maria McGuire, *To Take Arms* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 74.

17. Author interview with Sean O’Callaghan, London, February 1997.

18. Mary Fitzgerald, “ETA Admits Ties with Provos. Terror Groups Help Each Other, Says Basque Ex-Leader,” *Belfast Telegraph*, May 20, 2002.

19. Fernando Iturribarria, “La justicia francesa prueba la conexión entre el terrorista ‘Carlos’ y ETA pm,” *El Correo*, April 8, 2007.

20. Domínguez, *De la negociación a la tregua*, 76.

21. Andrés Casinello, “ETA y el problema vasco” (paper, 1984 Seminar on International Terrorism, organized in Madrid by the *Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales*).

22. For a more detailed description of the contacts with some of these countries, see Domínguez, *De la negociación a la tregua*, 124–127; and Domínguez, *Las conexiones de ETA en América*.

23. Juan de Dios Colmenero, “ETA se financia en Iberoamérica,” *La Clave*, July 2–8, 2004, 14–17.

24. Juzgado Central de Instrucción número 6, Audiencia Nacional, Sumario 75/09 (DP 263/08), Auto de procesamiento, February 24, 2010.

25. For a thorough analysis of the complex system of organizations linked to ETA, their actions, and the nature of such a relationship, see José Manuel Mata, *El nacionalismo vasco radical. Discurso, organizaciones y expresiones* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1993).

26. The banning of *Batasuna* by the Spanish judicial system was backed up by the European Human Rights Tribunal in June 2009. On the rationale behind the banning of ETA’s political wing, see Rogelio Alonso and Fernando Reinares, “Terrorism, Human Rights and Law Enforcement in Spain,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17, no. 1/2 (2005): 265–278, 270–272. On the damaging effect that the banning has had for ETA,

see Rogelio Alonso, "The Challenges for Democracy and Legitimacy while Confronting Terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country," in *The Consequences of Counterterrorist Policies in Democracies*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 213–254.

27. To this extent, the involvement of certain figures who have shown a deep lack of knowledge of the causes and consequences of ETA's terrorism has been notorious. Consequently, they have aligned themselves with ETA's agenda, becoming conveyors of the terrorist group's propaganda. Father Alec Reid, who acted as an intermediary between the IRA and the British government, and Brian Currin, who was part of the board that supervised the early release of terrorist prisoners in Northern Ireland, are probably the best examples. On their damaging role in the Basque Country, see Rogelio Alonso, "Pathways Out of Terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country: The Misrepresentation of the Irish model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 4 (2004): 695–713; and Rogelio Alonso, "Políticas Antiterroristas y procesos de paz: ¿Qué papel y qué consecuencias para las víctimas del terrorismo?," in *Las víctimas del terrorismo en el discurso político*, ed. Rogelio Alonso and Cristina Cuesta (Madrid: Editorial Dilex, 2006).

28. Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report by Mr Alvaro Gil Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, On His Visit to Spain and the Basque Country, 5–8 February 2001, for the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, CommDH, March 9, 2001), 2.

29. In 1991, ETA activist Ángel María Ezquerro Andueza was arrested in possession of one of these documents (*Kemen*, no. 37, 1978). More documents on this issue were found in possession of other ETA activists arrested in March 1998.

30. *Civil and Political Rights, Including the Question of Torture and Detention. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Question of Torture, Theo van Boven. Addendum. Visit to Spain* (Geneva: United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sixtieth session, E/CN.4/2004/56/Add.2, February 6, 2004).

31. It should be mentioned that ETA has often used television footage to identify their targets. Spanish police discovered TV footage of a raid in Cahors (France) in which three ETA members were arrested with 500 kilos of explosives. The policemen who were coming in and out of the raided house had been identified as targets by ETA's activists.

32. The exchange of messages between ETA and the Spanish government delivered by Pérez Esquivel is summarized in Domínguez, *Josu Ternera. Una vida en ETA*, 248–252.

33. In March 2006 ETA declared a "permanent ceasefire" that was "officially" ended in June 2007. For the duration of the truce the terrorist group had remained active, continuing with the economic extortion of individuals and the acquisition of weapons and explosives. In December 2006 a bomb detonated by ETA at Madrid's international airport killed two people.

34. Javier Pagola, "Sectores de Batasuna alardean de la 'victoria de ETA' tras el apoyo de la UE al 'proceso,'" *Abc*, November 1, 2006.

35. John Bew, Martyn Frampton, and Iñigo Gurruchaga, *Talking to Terrorists. Making Peace in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2009); Alonso, "Pathways Out of Terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country."

36. Alonso, "Pathways Out of Terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country."

37. These were the words of prominent IRA figures. See *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, December 17, 1998; and *The Guardian*, July 13, 1999. Some examples of

the distorted interpretation of the Northern Ireland process put forth by Basque nationalists with the aim of adopting a favorable model for the Basque context can be seen in Iker Gallastegi, “Sinn Féin y Herri Batasuna,” *Gara*, February 22, 2004; Teresa Toda, “Si por Garzón fuera, en Irlanda no habría paz,” *Gara*, February 19, 2002; and “ETA censura la falta de una declaración de Downing Street,” *Gara*, January 30, 2002.

38. Alonso, *The IRA and Armed Struggle*.

39. One of *Batasuna*'s leaders stated in the past that “Ireland was a mirror for us,” adding that “so was the Republican movement,” because although “negotiation was always regarded here in the Basque Country as suspect ... Sinn Féin and the Republican movement showed us that negotiation did not have to lead to political treachery. If it could happen in Ireland, why not in the Basque Country?” Paddy Woodworth, “Basque Leader Sees Peace Process as Way Forward,” *The Irish Times*, October 31, 1998.

40. David Sharrock, “ETA Sets Foot on Road That Led to Ulster Deal,” *The Guardian*, August 22, 1998.

41. George Mitchell, *Making Peace. The Inside Story of the Making of the Good Friday Agreement* (London: William Heinemann, 1999); Mary-Alice C. Clancy, *Peace Without Consensus: Power Sharing Politics in Northern Ireland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010).

42. David Sharrock and Mark Davenport, *Man of War. Man of Peace? The Unauthorised Biography of Gerry Adams* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 319–31; Clancy, *Peace Without Consensus*.

43. Vasco Press, *Crónica de Documentacion y Actualidad*, no. 1281, 2006. At the same time, the Basque president, nationalist Juan José Ibarretxe, set up various groups of “international experts and mediators” to lobby in favor of negotiating with ETA and *Batasuna*.

44. Author's interview with member of Spanish intelligence service, Madrid, September 2010.

45. Adrian Guelke, “‘Comparatively Peaceful’: South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland,” in *A Farewell to Arms? From ‘Long War’ to Long Peace in Northern Ireland*, ed. Adrian Guelke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 223–233; Pdraig O'Malley, “Northern Ireland and South Africa: ‘Hope and History at a Crossroads,’” in *Northern Ireland and the Divided World. Post Agreement Northern Ireland in Comparative Perspective*, ed. John McGarry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 276–308.

46. See, for example, Henry Patterson, *Ireland Since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 128–31, 160–61, 192–99; Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Streets. The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1990), 156–157, 245–246.

47. Quoted in Mark Hennessy, “Republicans Woo Young Voters with Softer Image,” *The Irish Times*, July 31, 2001.

48. See for example, Florencio Domínguez, “Currin, el enterao,” *El Correo*, August 17, 2010.

49. Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos, Sección quinta, Asunto Herri Batasuna y Batasuna c. España. *Demandas*, nos. 28503/04 et 25817/04. Sentencia Estrasburgo, June 30, 2009.

50. Jone Lurgain, “El proceso en Batasuna es irreversible,” *Deia*, February 24, 2010.

51. Jone Lurgain, “No es esencial la declaración pública de un alto el fuego de ETA, asumidos los principios Mitchell,” *Deia*, February 25, 2010.

52. These principles were not respected by the parties to which they applied. An Independent Monitoring Commission was set up to assess the terrorist group's adherence to their ceasefires and to guarantee that the political parties linked to the terrorists groups collaborated actively so that decommissioning was achieved. However, the Commission constantly refused to respect its own guidelines, thus accepting the terrorist group's constant breach of their ceasefires and the parties' lack of collaboration with the Commission. The Commission, very much like the Mitchell principles, was mainly a fig leaf for the British government to get off the hook for the demand for real decommissioning. At the same time, decommissioning became a very useful tool for Gerry Adams to try to extract concessions from the British government. See Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (London: Penguin, 2002).

53. See, for example, "El precio de la paz," *El País*, May 14, 2005, and "¿Una salida para el conflicto vasco?," *El País*, January 20, 2007. Both articles were written by Vicenç Fisas, who claims, implausibly, to have analyzed "all the negotiation processes that exist in the world."

54. Data reported in *Euskobarómetro*, a regular survey conducted by the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of the Basque Country, at <http://www.ehu.es/euskobarometro/> (accessed April 19, 2011). The survey conducted in 2008 revealed that full explicit support for ETA amounted to only 1%; even among those who declared themselves to be voters of the political wing of ETA, such support was extremely low at 2%. This very low percentage has remained since then.

55. Francisco Llera, *Los Vascos y la Política. El proceso político vasco: elecciones, partidos, opinión pública y legitimación en el País Vasco, 1977–1992* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1994), 97–119; Juan J. Linz, *Conflicto en Euskadi* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1986), 617–665.

56. This is the unambiguous verdict reached by regular surveys and studies of Basque public opinion. See *Euskobarómetro. Estudio periódico de la opinión pública vasca*, Political Science and Public Administration Department, University of the Basque Country, Bilbao.

57. From 1983 to 1987, a terrorist campaign was carried out against suspected members and supporters of ETA by a shadowy organization known as GAL (*Grupo Antiterrorista de Liberación*), resulting in the killing of 27 individuals. This illegal group was secretly formed by police officials who recruited mercenary assassins from among organized criminals in France and Portugal. Spain proved to be a functioning democratic regime, and the rule of law was finally applied to the policemen, gangsters, and some politicians belonging to the Socialist Party who were involved. They received severe court sentences for their illegal activities as part of GAL. Families of their victims received monetary compensation through funds from the State budget, the same procedure as in the case of relatives whose loved ones were killed by other terrorist organizations, including ETA. For an analysis of GAL, see Paddy Woodworth, *Dirty Wars, Clean Hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001).

58. See, for example, how in January 2007 a report by the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman found that officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary's (RUC) Special Branch protected informants inside Loyalist terrorist groups and failed to stop them committing up to 15 murders. In March 2008 an independent police team investigating this web of collusion between Loyalist terrorists and the Special Branch discovered that the amount of murders could be higher. In 2001 Canadian judge Peter Cory was commissioned to investigate controversial killings in which collusion of security forces in Northern Ireland was suspected. The murder of Pat Finucane in February 1989 was one of the cases. In 2003 the Stevens Inquiry, headed by Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, had already declared that there had been collusion and that the

death could have been prevented. Judge Cory also looked into killings committed by the IRA that gave rise to allegations that republicans had been assisted by security leaks from the Republic of Ireland.

59. Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience* (London: Vintage, 1998), 104.

60. Examples of these erroneous generalizations can be found in Fisas, "El precio de la paz," and "¿Una salida para el conflicto vasco?."

61. Interview with Father Alec Reid published in *El Periódico de Cataluña*, March 23, 2007. Father Alec Reid was implausibly described as "a key figure in the attempts to prevent the peace process from collapsing" in Alfonso Daniels, "ETA Now Ready to Give Up the Gun," *The Observer*, March 19, 2006. Reid's pronouncements have frequently legitimized ETA at the expense of its victims; see interviews with Reid in *El Mundo*, January 30, 2007; *El Correo*, May 20, 2002; and *El Correo*, December 28, 2005.

62. See, for example, José Zalaquett, "Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation: Lessons for the International Community," in *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, ed. Cynthia J. Arnson (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 341–61.

63. See Ramón Sola, "Los consejos de expertos que Zapatero no quiso oír," *Gara*, June 6, 2007.

64. Ibid.

65. *Gara*, October 31, 2004.