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Intelligence actions in Operation Chavín de Huántar

Acciones de inteligencia en la Operación Chavín de Huántar

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ABSTRACT. This article describes the intelligence actions carried out between December 17, 1996, and April 22, 1997, leading to the rescue of the persons kidnapped by the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to Peru. The objective of this research was to identify whether the government maintained its role as decision-maker, social manager, and creator of public value (with the forces of law and order as the executors of the political decision), and to what extent the intelligence community's inquiries contributed to the success of the rescue operation. Thus, opening the discussion on the issue of implementing public policies to resolve the crisis generated by hostage-taking by subversive groups.

KEYWORDS: domestic policy; hostage rescue; intelligence; military operation; political crisis; terrorism

RESUMEN. Este artículo describe las acciones de inteligencia realizadas entre el 17 de diciembre de 1996 al 22 de abril de 1997, conducentes al rescate de las personas secuestradas por el Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) en la residencia del embajador del Japón en el Perú. El objetivo de la investigación fue identificar si el gobierno mantuvo su rol de ente decisor, gerente social y creador de valor público (con las fuerzas del orden como ejecutantes de la decisión política, y en qué medida las indagaciones realizadas por la comunidad de inteligencia contribuyeron al éxito de la operación de rescate. Con ello, se abre el debate sobre el tema de la implementación de políticas públicas para resolver la crisis que genera una toma de rehenes por grupos subversivos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: crisis política; inteligencia; operación militar; política interna; rescate de rehenes; terrorismo

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Introduction

This article highlights the transcendence of the coordination between the government, the national intelligence community, and the Peruvian Armed Forces during the intelligence actions of the military operation to rescue the “Chavín de Huántar” hostages. The case study focuses on the actions planned and conducted by the personnel of the national intelligence community in obtaining information concerning the decision-making and execution of Operation Chavín de Huántar (1996-1997).

Besides cognizing the efforts of the intelligence personnel, this article intends to present the totality of their actions, which were fundamental in the successful outcome of the operation. Although this personnel’s actions have been minimized and questioned and the experience they obtained in negotiation, legal order, public policies, public value, technology, and quality of human resources has not been exploited, it could very well contribute to the reflection of the states in search of public policies.

The article also presents the two possibilities available to the Peruvian government to solve this hostage crisis, (i) a peaceful solution, based on direct dialogues through guarantors appointed by the Head of State or (ii) a military solution through a rescue operation that did not guarantee the safety of the hostages.

The development of this article involves the theory of special operations in military hostage rescue actions, which is centered and supported by the principles of war, intelligence procedures, obtaining relative superiority, and reducing the area of vulnerability when entering into operations. The following objectives have been considered: (i) to establish what actions were taken by the personnel of the intelligence community to adequately execute the mentioned operation, (ii) to identify how the intelligence community personnel carried out their work in this process, and (iii) to understand how the information obtained was used.

The hypothesis is that the gathering of information by the intelligence community and its subsequent conversion into procedural data was a transcendental aspect in the planning, decision-making, and execution of the military rescue operation.

This article addresses three questions: What are the theoretical elements related to government policies, public value creation, decision theory, and social management for the protection of the nation? What are the findings of this analysis based on the specific objectives? What are the conclusions?

Theoretical Framework

The absence of public policies on defense and security

On the night of December 17, 1996, fourteen members of the terrorist group Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) executed Operation Comrade Oscar Torre Condesu, which consisted of an assault on the residence of the Japanese ambassador

to Peru. They took hostage more than eight hundred guests of different nationalities, including businessmen, diplomats, religious, military, and politicians with their respective families. After several releases by the MRTA, the number of hostages was reduced to seventy-two. On April 22, 1997, after several failed negotiations, and in the face of an imminent threat to the health of the hostages, the government ordered the use of military force to rescue them.

Prior to this terrorist action and subsequent rescue, the political class had disengaged from security and defense matters. There was an evident disinterest in the design of adequate public policies to consolidate the defeat of terrorism after the capture of the main commanders of the terrorist organizations of MRTA and the Communist Party of Peru –*Sendero Luminoso* (PCP-SL). The existing policies were more focused on combating the internal threat through law enforcement agencies than on strengthening other important fields such as health, agriculture, and education, among others. There was no interaction with and among these fields to ensure the definitive success in the fight against subversion. With the consolidation of democracy and the apparent defeat of terrorism, defense policies were no longer part of the national agenda; other fields were privileged such as social and assistance policies that contributed to obtaining the citizens' approval towards the government and thus obtain their votes.

In this regard, General Leonardo Longa, in an interview granted for this investigation, said:

Terrorism was only defeated at the tactical level, not at the strategic or operational level, no social, economic or legal policy was conceived to prevent terrorist remnants from taking refuge in the Peruvian jungle; the success achieved was not consolidated. Counter-terrorist bases were withdrawn, and self-defense committees were abandoned, and underprivileged society began to live with terrorists and drug traffickers. New threats have appeared, such as illegal logging, mining, smuggling, etc. [...].

The government thought that by cutting off the head, the body would die. The body was headless, but it did not die, and it continued to harm the country, and there were still deaths and attacks, which showed that this strategy was not strong enough to neutralize terrorism. (L. Longa, comunicación personal, 20 de noviembre de 2017)

The intelligence community and, above all, the government had to continue to pull strings and prevent the terrorist organization from regenerating and producing a new head.

The following observation is an important view that points out that security and defense are not esoteric issues:

They must constitute public policies and be the object of attention of the whole of society. The political class is responsible for formulating defense policies through the

corresponding democratic procedures, just as it is responsible for formulating agricultural, tax, and educational policies. The military people were not elected, and no matter how professional they are, in a democracy, it is not their responsibility to formulate policies but to execute them. (Palma, 2002, p. 51)

The perception that national security and defense policies were inadequate starts from our constitutions and is based on two reasons:

First, because they are located in the chapter destined to define the public powers and the autonomous organisms; and second, because, as Dr. Rubio says, aspects of security and defense are mixed with matters related to the military and police institutions. (Robles, 2006, p. 17).

The existing constitutional norms in our charters, through the times, related to national security and defense give the Armed Forces a constitutional status that has kept them close to the high-level decisions of the State (Robles, 2006).

Table 1. National Security and Defense in the Political Constitutions

Concept	Political Constitution of 1979		Political Constitution of 1993	
	Summary	Article	Summary	Article(s)
As a fundamental right	Not mentioned		Not mentioned	
Definition	Not mentioned		Not mentioned	
Responsibility	Not guaranteed by the State	269	Not guaranteed by the State	163
Participants	Every person according to the law	270	Every person according to the law	163
Features	Permanent and integrally	270	Permanent and integrally	163
Scope of application	Not mentioned		Internal and External Scope	163
Achieved through	Lawless organized system	271	National Defense System	163, 164

Source: Legal Defense Institute (2006)

Table 1 shows that the last two constitutions did not give due importance to national defense. It was not until the 1993 Constitution that the existence of a National Defense System was mentioned for the first time. The concept of public defense pol-

icies was recently mentioned in the National Agreement of 2002, which had the participation of representatives of civil society and state organizations.

Restructuring the strategy of combating subversion

Former president Fujimori designed a strategy with a personalist approach. He personally took on the counter-subversive struggle, backed by a legal framework against terrorism enacted by his government. According to Buleje (2015), Fujimori presided over the National Security and Defense Council and the National Intelligence System (SIN) and assumed the position of the supreme chief of the Armed Forces. He understood that the problem of terrorism was not exclusive to law and order enforcement agencies and that the initiative and decision should also come from the citizens, whom he involved through the creation of the Self-Defense Committees, which were made up of peasants, organized, trained, and armed by the armed forces (p. 50). Fujimori also promoted a policy of social development with government strategic purposes. According to Dietrich (2002), this awareness marked a difference with his predecessors, who maintained the outdated idea of confronting an ordinary enemy, without prior diagnosis and without clear policies (p. 16).

Civilians had new responsibilities, According to Bowen (2013), “the new decrees established obligations for civilians by requiring them to provide information to the intelligence and support services of the Armed Forces whenever it is required” (p. 127). The same author stated, “a new defense system was also being created. The supreme body of this would be the National Defense Council — that President Fujimori would lead —, which would be made up of the head of the SIN and the armed forces, as well as the ministers of the interior and defense.” (p. 127)

Henry Pease (2003), referring to the interpretations made about Fujimorism among the regimes between dictatorship and democracy and following the work of other scholars such as Morlino, O'Donnell, Lopez, Crabtree, Cotler, Grompone, Degregori, Tanaka, Rospigliosi, Gonzales de Olarte, and Dammert, concludes that Fujimori's regime was authoritarian-civil-military.

But what develops after January 1, 1993, is an authoritarian-civil-military regime. Its origin is civilian, a constitutionally elected leader, together with another civilian, expelled from the Armed Forces, carry out two previous tasks; they take over and make autonomous, from the institutional commands, the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces and the National Police, which Montesinos will really lead from the National Intelligence Service. (Pease 2003, p. 68)

Pease's conclusion was corroborated by the investigation carried out by the National through the Investigating Commission of the Presidential Management of Alberto Fujimori, which indicated in its final report of June 15, 2002:

Under the direct leadership of Alberto Fujimori, hundreds of officials, including congressmen, ministers, high-ranking military officials, and regional and municipal authorities, under various forms, participated directly in the commission of these crimes, collaborated in their execution, hiding facts with the aim of subtracting those responsible for the rule of law, and finally, issuing norms of all ranks to cover the all-embracing and corrupt exercise of power with a shroud of legality. (Comisión Investigadora de la Gestión Presidencial de Alberto Fujimori, 2002, p. 201)

Concerning the counter-terrorism framework implemented by Fujimori, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, created in June 2000 by President Valentín Paniagua, published the following final report on 28 August 2003,

Drastic legislation was introduced after the self-coup on 5 April 1992, which was supported by 80% of the population. Decree-laws were passed concerning issues such as the National Intelligence System, the extension of police control of prisons, support for peasant patrols, the intervention of the Armed Forces in the universities, the intensification of sweep operations and civic action, the life imprisonment for cases of terrorism, faceless judges, the law of repentance for surrendered subversives, the reduction of the age of exemption from criminal responsibility from 18 to 15 years for those who committed crimes of terrorism, treason for crimes of terrorism, the military courts to try those accused of terrorism and reduced the time frame for the process, all the units linked to the fight against subversion and drug trafficking had to adapt their rules and procedures to the directives of the Operational Command of the Internal Front (COFI), led by the Joint Command of the Armed Forces, and the power to convict in absentia those responsible for the crime of terrorism was established. (Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación [CVR], 2003, pp. 85-87)

Another aspect that influenced the process of policy formulation was “The style of leadership that Alberto Fujimori imprinted, as well as his relationship with the Armed Forces.” (Buleje, 2015, p. 69)

Regarding Fujimori’s leadership style,

This leader is progressively winning over public opinion by solving the governance crisis and successfully applying the harsh recipe of economic stabilization and strategically defeating *Sendero Luminoso* through a concentration of powers in the executive branch. (Durand, 1996, p. 183)

Rojas (2008) said the following about Fujimori’s leadership:

His government was characterized by the use of personalization of leadership towards an authoritarian government reflected in the control of the press and the population that it sought to implement and more precisely evidenced in the self-coup of April 5, 1992, propitiated through the Armed Forces where violent and unconstitutional actions led to the unconstitutional dissolution of the two chambers of the Congress of the Republic and the intervention of the Judiciary branch. (p. 7)

Upon assuming his first government, and in order to keep the army under control for his personalistic purposes, Alberto Fujimori enacted two decree-laws that significantly increased his authoritarian leadership, (i) the power to designate the army's general commander and (ii) the repowering of the National Intelligence System (SIN), designating the National Intelligence Service as its governing body. According to Rojas (2008), these decree-laws made it possible for the President to choose the commander-general from among his most loyal generals, even to keep them in office for as many years as he saw fit according to his interests, and to use the SIN as a political weapon without civil-military control. (pp. 6-7)

Another concept that has been expressed in relation to this issue is that “the armed forces, despite being mediated by the civilian figure of Alberto Fujimori, became for all practical purposes the ‘party’ of government and assumed prerogatives of a political nature to the detriment of the elected civilian authorities.” (Degregori, 1993, p. 18)

Terrorist barbarism had been on the rise since before 1990. When Alberto Fujimori took office, he made a commitment to defeat it; he imposed more drastic anti-terrorist legislation and strengthened the National Intelligence System in order to achieve this commitment.

A sentence issued against Alberto Fujimori states,

(...) that it was from and through the SIN that the state apparatus was organized and restructured to confront, among other things, the fight against terrorist subversion—and for this purpose it has become an organized apparatus of power—to the point that he directed all the State's secret services, and centralized intelligence activities and gave them ‘A new dimension and tasks (i) a projection of the SINA law, linked to the defense and public security sectors; and (ii) concentrated intelligence information—in all areas of national development— provided to President Fujimori for which purpose he established an intelligence channel that allowed him to receive the intelligence produced by the competent bodies of the Armed Forces and National Police.’ (CSJR-SPE, 2009)

Concerning the handling of the actions to combat subversion, the Armed Forces have the manual for *Comprehensive Strategy for Counter-Subversion*. It declares that the state's counter-subversive action is not limited to confronting the subversive process from the moment the armed actions begin, but that it must anticipate the facts, developing public policies to stop the appearance of breeding grounds. If the state reacts when the insurrection has already appeared, its action will be late and, in the best of cases, will prevent the generalization of violence, but not the negative effects of its appearance and the costs of its neutralization. According to the same manual, the State carries out three phases in the military field to defeat subversion: prevention, intervention, and consolidation. These phases must be accompanied by public policies in the social, economic, and political fields. The prevention phase begins when

spontaneous violent conflicts occur within marginalized sectors, making it necessary to develop comprehensive policies that cover the economic, social, and political fields. The intervention phase occurs when subversive groups launch armed conflicts, and the Armed Forces intervene. The Armed Forces must have the support of state policies that suppress national internal contradictions and underlying structural problems, emphasizing those that can be used to favor the subversion. Finally, the consolidation phase begins with the successes achieved. It aims to take advantage of the circumstantial advantage for the sake of total pacification and return to the conditions that characterize a normal situation (Comando Conjunto de las FFAA, 2000, pp. 48-54). As can be seen, it is the state that must take the initiative to combat subversion from the very moment it is being developed and provide all the public policies to make the actions of the Armed Forces efficient.

Methods

The documentary and participative methodology attempted to collect, organize, and reconstruct the actions following the author's direct experience both in the operational and intelligence components. The descriptive design includes interviews and participant observation. The organization of the facts, their application, and the predominant form of the study are qualitative.

In-depth interview methods were conducted with participants that could contribute noteworthy information regarding their experiences, opinions, and expectations, producing an asymmetrical dialogue, given that they were actors in the events addressed by this research. The interviews were semi-structured to enable the introduction of additional questions to clarify concepts or obtain more information on desired topics. Instruments such as record sheets were used to summarize the information contained in documentary sources that served as the basis for the problem statement and the construction of the theoretical framework, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Tools, instruments, and data-rich locations

Tools	Instruments	Data-rich locations
In-depth interview	Interview guide	Experience of the actors involved in Operation Chavín de Huántar
Archive Review	Registration forms	Information collected or recorded in printed, audiovisual, and electronic materials. Publications and official documents, books, magazines, manuals, postgraduate theses, reports, press documents, documentaries, internet, etc.

Source: Created by the author

The fieldwork was carried out between August and November 2017, with in-depth interviews of various key actors involved in the rescue operation, such as planners, drivers, and hostages. Twenty interviews were carried out. The interviewees included: Admiral Luis Giannetti Rojas, former Vice President of the Republic and former hostage; Major General José Williams Zapata, former head of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces and head of the “*Tenaz*” patrol; Major Marco Castro Renwick, member of Dircote during the operation and head of the Search Department during the operation; NPP Commander René Colchado Huamani, member of the *Dircote* and head of the Analysis Department during the operation; Major General Leonardo Longa López, intelligence specialist; General Adolfo Coronado Fournier, head of the SIN Internal Front during the operation; EP technician Manuel Tullume Gonzales, intelligence technical specialist during the operation; EP technician Pedro Tolentino García, intelligence specialist during the operation; EP colonel Gutiérrez Ballón Luis, responsible for the construction of the tunnels during the operation; EP technician Walter Coronado, SIN specialist and supervisor of the construction of the tunnels; and EP technician Sabrera Céspedes, in charge of the paging station. Ex-hostage Alex Kouri was also interviewed; however, because of his remote location, he was unable to have the interview recorded. Therefore, his responses were submitted in written form, an action that does not prejudice the purposes of the investigation. In addition, Juan Zacarías Muñoz, the communicator who served as a foreign press correspondent during the events at the Embassy, was also interviewed. The objectives of the investigation, the conditions, and the contribution of their participation were explained to all the interviewees; they had the option of leaving the study at any time, without any consequences. The methodology followed for this article is shown in Figure 1.

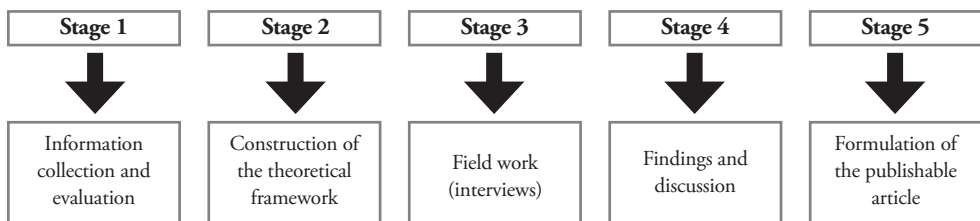


Figure 1. Stages of work followed in the development of this article.

Source: Created by the author.

In order to verify the quality and accuracy of the testimonial data collected in the fieldwork, they were compared with documentary evidence contained in (i) general academic publications, (ii) websites on the subject, (iii) the theory of operations held by Vice Admiral McRaven of the US Navy, and (iv) legal proceedings on the subject.

Results

Government public policies to solve the hostage crisis

Terrorist group actions of kidnapping hostages directly or indirectly affect all citizens in varying degrees of scope and with different consequences. The solutions proposed by the state will always be bound by particular interests that make it difficult to act and to satisfy all citizens equally. Alejandro Sakuda, in his prologue to the book written by Admiral Giampetri, points out that the press, with a few exceptions, took pains to sensationalize the events, disregarding the lives of the hostages or their families. Giampetri is not unreasonable in censoring the fact that most of the media acted with a lightness that showed their indifference to the danger faced not only by the hostages but also by the entire country (Giampetri, 2011, p. 13).

The open crisis produced by the takeover of the residence generated the opinion that this action should modify the nation's immediate interests:

The short and medium-term future of the nation and its own were at stake. The course of the economy, the stability of the government, the confidence of foreign investments, the development of tourism, and, in short, the country was at the expense of the outcome of the most serious attack in the history of Peru. (De Carlos, 1997, p. 138)

The coordination of the efforts can be appreciated in all the works analyzed on the military operation Chavín de Huántar, as well as the government as a decision-maker, social manager, and creator of public value, and law and order enforcement as executors of the political decision. There was an understanding between the political and the military components that the priority was re-establishing the rule of law and returning peace to the Peruvian society.

The public policy models employed by the government to solve the hostage crisis included the sequential, whose authors are Charles O. Jones and James Anderson.

The MS [sequential model] correctly describes the public policy process. If there are inaccuracies in relation to implementation or decision making or any other stage, it is because our theoretical structures are insufficient or underdeveloped to understand the deep functioning of each stage or system. (Estévez & Esper, 2009, p. 76)

Now, we ask ourselves ¿Why do most public policies not result in a law? Some scholars point out that “there are public decisions that are made by consensus and consultation among large interested groups (*stakeholders*), and it is by virtue of this that we do not find this *top-down* bias in the model because the MS can perfectly describe a policy that is of a consensual or decisional nature (Estévez & Esper, 2009).

Majone tells us that

A decision, in the sense of decision theory, is a choice or judgment made on the basis of available data, between well-defined courses of action and whose consequences in various 'states of nature' are reasonably well understood. The decision must be made based on the situation that the decision-maker faces *immediately*, taking into account from the *present* decision the probable consequences of each possible course of action. The terms are underlined to draw attention to the sense of urgency, necessity, and even the crisis that is implicit in the notion of decision. (1978, p. 346)

Moore postulates that public organizations aim to create "public value" to solve problems, meet needs, and enable the exercise of rights through the provision of goods, services, transactions, legislation, and regulations (1998).

According to Gómez, in his presentation at the International Congress on Citizen Participation in Crime Prevention and Public Safety held in Mexico in October 2006, generating importance in the public conscience is only possible when there are processes of negotiation and political agreement on the public problem affecting a community and the way in which it, with the help of the authorities, aims to solve it. Public value, insofar as it responds to citizens' preferences and aspirations, is perceived by society as a whole, as it is consumed and enjoyed by the community as a whole and not individually (2006).

Other noteworthy literature refers to the concept of *social management*, a field of action and knowledge focused on the promotion of social development. In that line, Mokate and Saavedra, point out that

Its task is to guarantee the creation of public value through management, contributing to the strengthening of democratic states, and citizenship supported by conceptual and practical contributions offered simultaneously by the fields of social development, public policy, and public management, the processes of forming inclusive and sustainable public policies and the generation of social policy impacts that arise from within the organizations. The creation of public value is highlighted as a central element. The importance of working with the multiplicity of actors that have interests or are involved in the promotion of development is emphasized, and it is concluded that it is necessary to work simultaneously on actions and objectives of programmatic management, organizational management, and political management for the improvement of the quality and conditions of life of the population. (2006, p. 7)

Another important opinion proposes that

(...) public value benefits the social community. The definition of what is valuable and the confirmation of the effective production of public value does not come through market transactions or explicit individual preferences. Instead, it is the political process

that has to guide decision-making processes in terms of defining priorities, allocating resources, and confirming the generation of valuable benefits. (Alford, 2002)

A concept concerning the management of social policies and all public policies points out that they

(...) have been judged in light of the chronic nature of the problems of poverty, inequality, and mistrust. It is in this context that the citizens' demand arises for better management of the interventions that propose to improve the living conditions of our society and to facilitate the transition towards a better future. This is not only related to more efficient use of public resources and more effective intervention in improving the quality of life and opportunities, but also to more and better public policies and services with a criterion of participation and accountability to civil society. Social management arises from the need to meet this demand because it proposes to ensure that social policies and programs respond in a valuable, relevant, effective, and efficient manner to major problems faced by citizens, thereby promoting the achievement of social development in an equitable and sustainable manner. (Mokate y Saavedra, 2007, p. 2)

The field of public policy allows social management to generate public value because it facilitates understanding and consensus on proposals for (i) policy formulation, (ii) the generation of alternatives for development interventions, (iii) knowledge of the benefits and limitations of each, (iv) the generation of processes for obtaining support, and (v) the generation of partnerships for policy implementation.

The formulation of the public policies implemented by the government for decision-making in the hostage crisis has a similarity with the sequential model proposed by Charles O. Jones (1970), which states "the study of public policies is carried out on a sequence of stages that in the end constitute their overall structure." In relation to this issue, it is worth mentioning that "In the field of political science, the sequential model of public policy is proposed to divide the public policy process into a series of stages, discussing various factors that affect them." (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999 y 1993)

In the specific case of government decision-making in Operation Chavín de Huántar, although the methodology of military planning based on the formulation of a strategic assessment before making a decision was used, it did not differ substantially from the methodology proposed by Jones. Table 3 shows that the stages of public policy formulation in Jones' sequential model are very similar to those of military planning.

Table 3. Comparison of the stages of the Jones model versus the military planning

O. Jones model	Military planning model
Agenda Society's demand for the solution of the problem	Mission The objective of military planning
Discussion or formulation The course of action to solve this problem	Situation and likely forms of action Summary of the important aspects of the situation that has given rise to the problem
Decision Public policy (course of government action already legitimated)	Analysis of probable forms of action Analyzes the behavior of the probable forms of action against each capacity of the enemy within the operational environment, establishes its feasibility, determines the degree of acceptability, and extracts the advantages and disadvantages for comparison.
Implementation Implementation of public policy	Comparison of likely forms of action This comparison is made through the advantages and disadvantages that have emerged from the analysis of the possible forms of action.
Evaluation Recommendations or judgments on the value of public policy	Recommendation and conclusions The commander expresses his decision by verifying the clear and concise expression of the form of action selected after determining the best form of action.

Source: Created by the author.

Discussion

Work of the intelligence community

Operation Chavín de Huántar became a paradigm for special hostage rescue operations worldwide; it ended a serious crisis with a minimal loss of hostage lives, in a way that was admired and described as the best military hostage rescue operation in the world.

The success of this operation was a consequence not only of the government's determination, but also of the (i) correct application in the military field of the theory of special operations for the release of hostages, thanks to effective information gathering and intelligence work both inside and outside the residence, and (ii) of the recommendations provided to the government by the intelligence community.

The recommendations provided by the intelligence community and their implementation by the government, which allowed the operation to be successful were identified in this study as (i) retaining government leadership, (ii) implementing the set of anti-terrorism laws enacted, (iii) carrying out the diplomatic strategy to gain the support of key nations, and (iv) gaining time to regain strategic initiative. Figure 2 describes the actions taken by the government to solve the hostage crisis based on the recommendations of the intelligence community.

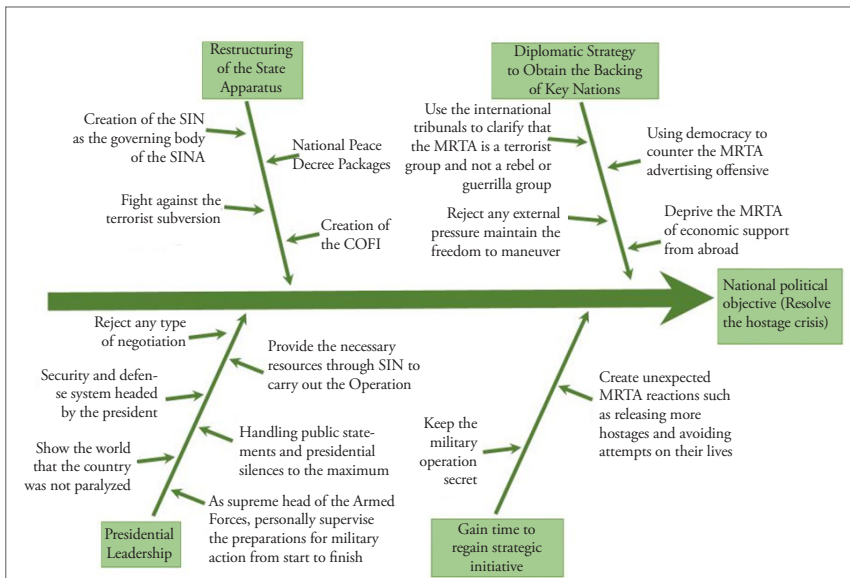


Figure 2. Government actions based on recommendations from the intelligence community
Source: Created by the author.

General José Williams, commander of the intervention force in Operation Chavín de Huántar, in an interview offered for this work, comments on the intelligence work.

Intelligence is extremely valuable because, without information, a successful operation cannot be carried out. Without the processing of evident intelligence, it is nearly impossible to obtain success. The better the information and the more efficient the intelligence, the better it will anticipate situations and help operations to perform exactly the right tasks. Intelligence and operations are two assets that belong to the field of security, and that always go hand in hand. They are interdependent and must maintain the best relations. Three aspects attracted my attention: one, organizing the force, seeking information and initiating training, intelligence. It was extremely important to know who the enemy was, how many there were, how they were armed or

equipped, what place they occupied, how many hostages there were, and everything that could be useful to us to act in that scenario. It means, therefore, that income, routes, and a whole series of aspects that an operational force develops but that need the participation of intelligence; we train based on the intelligence provided. (J. Williams, comunicación personal, 30 noviembre 2016)

Admiral Luis Giampetri also mentions intelligence work, “if you do not have intelligence, you have nothing, you must know the tiniest detail of the target. It is not only about entering and blow away a target; you must blow away the exact and precise part.” (L. Giampetri, comunicación personal, 20 de enero de 2016)

An important concept about negotiating with violent groups is that it should be led exclusively by the state, while the military response should have a real deterrent effect on crime. The government was forced to relinquish the recapture of the building by force of arms.

The high number of hostages, their elevated status and nationalities, and the fact that the property had Tokyo stamped documentation bound him hand and foot. In his first message to the country, five days after the attack, he was adamant, he rejected any possibility of negotiation, demanded the surrender of weapons and the release of the captives; in return, for the possibility of considering the departure of the kidnappers from the country. (De Carlos, 1997, p. 138)

The management of the hostage crisis is always the responsibility of the executive branch; this is the entity that must make the decisions. As Alvarez and Salas state,

The teams of advisors must be multidisciplinary. The flow of information, fast, timely, and reliable; intelligence becomes vital because, through it, you obtain the background that will allow good decision-making. Facing the recurrent cases of hostage-taking, McRaven pointed out that the application of the Special Operations Theory could contribute to responding to them by applying behaviors that political and strategic decision-makers facing a hostage crisis should adopt to successfully solve the complex challenges that such situations impose, considering the complexity of the scenarios that can arise, and the ethical aspects that compel considering the political interests of a country, the common good of the society they serve, and the fundamental rights that people involved in a terrorist kidnapping have. (2013, p. 23)

According to Sally Bowen (2003), the Japanese had about twenty of their nationals inside the residence, theoretically sovereign territory, and were opposed to any intervention, unless it was the last resort. The possibility of one of their citizens dying in a clumsy rescue operation was unthinkable for the Japanese government.

Luis Giampetri wrote the following:

(...) the conflict was at the residence of his country's ambassador, and this meant not only that it was taking place on Japanese territory, but also that —according to the

Vienna Convention— all facilities belonging to a diplomatic corps were and are inviolable. Japan’s consent was required to enter the ambassador’s residence. (Giampetri, 2011, p. 97)

The decision to carry out special hostage rescue operations should always entail analysis and must be made at the highest political level. The Chavín de Huántar operation had to be carried out while avoiding a diplomatic conflict, as the operations had to take place on foreign territory and with hostages of various nationalities. Therefore, the decision to carry out the operation had to necessarily be made by the highest political level of the country. Table 4 corroborates the observation that the highest political level has always taken all the decisions in the most important hostage rescue operations worldwide.

Table 4. Level of political decision in hostage rescue operations around the world

Operation	Decision level
Rescue of Jewish hostages in Entebbe (July 1976)	Prime Minister Isaac Shamir
GSG-9 commanders storm a Lufthansa aircraft and release hostages taken by Palestinian terrorists at Mogadishu airport in Somalia (October 1977)	German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt
Operation Eagle Claw to free American hostages at the US Embassy in Iran (April 1980)	President Jimmy Carter
Special Air Service commands conduct Operation Nimrod and end the crisis of the Iranian Embassy takeover in London (May 1980)	Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
Assault on Bogotá’s Palace of Justice by M-19 guerrillas (November 1985)	Colombian President Belisario Betancur
Rescue of hostages in the hands of the FARC, Operation Checkmate	Colombian President Alvaro Uribe

Source: Created by the author.

Intelligence and its contribution to the theory of special operations for hostage rescue

Historical case studies of special forces operations, conducted by countries with extensive experience in hostage rescue operations, have promoted the military field to adopt the concepts of the theory of special operations for hostage rescue, which seeks to obtain the relative advantage and reduce the area of vulnerability.

The theory of special operations, upheld by Vice Admiral William H. McRaven of the U.S. Navy, has drawn valuable lessons from the study of this type of histori-

cal cases. The theory sets out the correct and timely use of special forces in combat. Relative superiority over the enemy and success is possible by employing principles of warfare, such as simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, swiftness, and objective in a plan carefully conceived in secrecy, rehearsed with the utmost realism, and using the elements of surprise, swiftness, and effective action. The area of vulnerability, which is considered the area where the operation is initiated until the attacking force reaches the enemy's front line, is reduced with technology, intelligence, training, and infiltration procedures, all this in secrecy:

Intelligence and its procedures as the interdependence of tactical operations, imagination, utility, opportunity, flexibility, and security play an essential role because intelligence determines the magnitude of the enemy's defenses, their weaknesses, their direction of attack, their probable action, and the characteristics of the terrain and the probable duration of the operation. (Álvarez, 2011, p. 20)

The special operations theory states that success is based on the correct application of the principles of warfare and intelligence procedures that reduce friction to controllable levels. Once the relative superiority over the enemy is achieved, the intervention force is no longer at a disadvantage and can exploit the enemy's weaknesses and ensure victory. By determining the best way to achieve relative superiority, we can prepare ourselves adequately and devise a successful plan.

Similarly, the military doctrine states that "military intelligence must constitute a fundamental auxiliary to direct defense" (Ugarte, 1995, p. 13). However, the government would decide that SIN would carry out this work. The military doctrine also points out how one of the intelligence procedures, that of the Unit or Central Command, must unify efforts to facilitate the collection of information. This intelligence procedure was materialized when the government assumed total leadership of the operations, as well as supervision of military action preparations.

The National Intelligence Service applied the Command Unit procedure by centralizing all the intelligence bodies in a single community. The intelligence community had already been created, and, as Major Marco Castro stated in a personal interview, "weekly intelligence coordination meetings were held at the SIN facilities" (M. Castro, comunicación personal, 18 de octubre de 2018). The National Intelligence Service fully assumed the tasks assigned to it from the beginning of the crisis thanks to the government's policy of restructuring the State apparatus, which made the National Intelligence Service the governing body of these processes. Derivations such as the activation and creation of secret programs were established, these included (i) the Government's Continuity Centres, and (ii) the Rapid Response Analysis Centre, both run by the National Intelligence Service.

Other intelligence procedures were involved in the operation that exploited creativity or initiative at a maximum. For instance, on the part of the MRTA, it used an armored van painted as an ambulance with the seats removed to transport the assault team. No police officer could have imagined that a group of terrorists was being moved inside that vehicle headed to take over the residence of the Japanese ambassador.

Intelligence personnel, in turn, turned to imaginative resources, carrying out ingenious actions such as (i) injecting animal fat into the broiled chickens brought in as food for the abductors, which was intended to hinder their physical reactions and movements; (ii) testing with sedative-laced drinking water for the abductors; this action was discarded because not all of them drank at the same time, and, therefore, they would not all fall asleep at the same time; (iii) building tunnels to reach the floor of the residence; (iv) planting microphones in various objects; (vi) producing exact replicas of the residence, constructed to train the intervening forces, etc.

Figure 3 details the principles of warfare and the actions that were carried out to fulfill them during the Chavín de Huántar operation. These principles were developed by analysts and intelligence specialists. In addition to these principles, the government's direct supervision of the preparations and trials for military action raised operation participant morale because they felt supported.

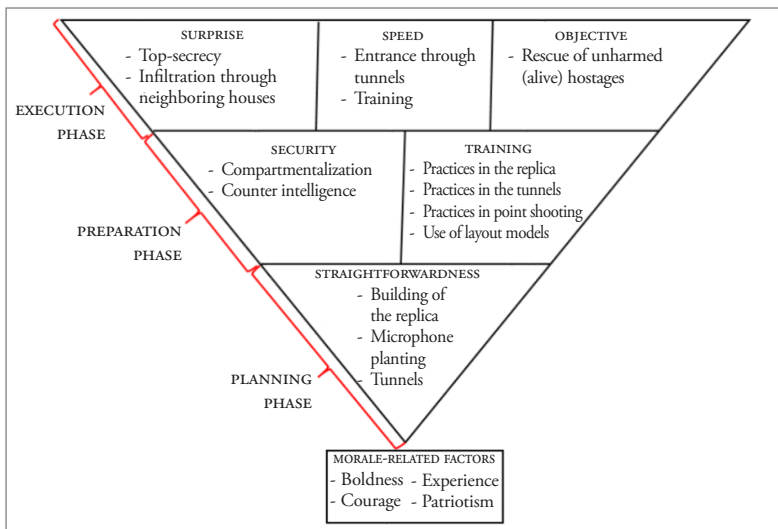


Figure 3. Actions to comply with the principles of war in Operation Chavín de Huántar. Source: Created by the author based on Álvarez (2011).

As mentioned, the relative superiority stipulated in the theory of special forces is achieved when the attacking force obtains a decisive advantage over the enemy;

this is a point of high risk because the enemy's defense is strongest. However, once the obstacle is overcome, the probability of success is greater than the probability of failure. The longer the combat, the more difficult it is to reach relative superiority. In Operation Chavín de Huántar, the elements of swiftness and surprise in the actions allowed reaching relative superiority in less than 13 minutes.

The area of vulnerability is significantly reduced by entering combat with relative superiority already achieved. In Operation Chavín de Huántar, the area of vulnerability was reduced by infiltrating the intervening force who, dressed in police uniforms and police vehicles, moved to the entrance of the tunnels in secrecy and, through them, reached the final objective. According to the theory of the special forces, reducing the area of vulnerability to achieve the success of the mission quickly requires moving to the point where the attacking force is most vulnerable. Thus, the most vulnerable point was approaching the target from surrounding houses, using the spacious and unprotected garden areas to reach the halls of the residence where the terrorists and hostages were located. To this end, tunnels were built underground, starting from the neighboring houses and ending at the residence, that is, on the target. As a result, the point of vulnerability was as precise as possible to fulfill our mission, which was to enter the residence unexpectedly and quickly.

In this regard, Army technician Pedro Tolentino said:

From the beginning, the idea was that this rescue operation required better intelligence and preparation than Operation Entebbe, to be successful, and to avoid what happened in the rescue operation carried out by the Colombians to recover the Palace of Justice, which ended in a massacre. Therefore, we took advantage of a series of videos of rescue operations that were provided by Channel 2. During the Entebbe rescue, it was seen that a group of commandos entered the airport through sewage ducts, and, from there, the idea of entering through tunnels was formed. (P. Tolentino, comunicación personal, 25 de noviembre de 2016)

Figure 4 shows the extent of relative superiority, as well as the point and area of vulnerability in the operation according to the theory of special forces operations. It can be seen that the area is small because relative superiority had already been obtained at the time the attack was launched thanks to intelligence actions (approaching through tunnels to obtain surprise and taking the terrorist positions identified by intelligence, etc.).

In this regard, Army technician Walter Coronado pointed out:

Prior to the construction of the tunnels, on the 18th and 19th of December, a team of Israeli military personnel was gathered. They performed a survey of the area of operations (They visited all the neighboring houses, the clinic, and even the Royal *Chifa*). They recommended that the form of action for the rescue was to carry out a frontal

and violent attack that would result in 30% of the personnel involved being killed. Fujimori did not accept this plan and ordered the construction of a tunnel, under the supervision of the SIN, that would lead to the gardens of the residence in order to get as close as possible to the intervention force. On January 2, 1997, twenty-five miners from the Centromín Perú and San Cristóbal mines gathered in house no. 4, in addition to five other miners from Ayacucho. (W. Coronado, comunicación personal, 20 de enero de 2016)

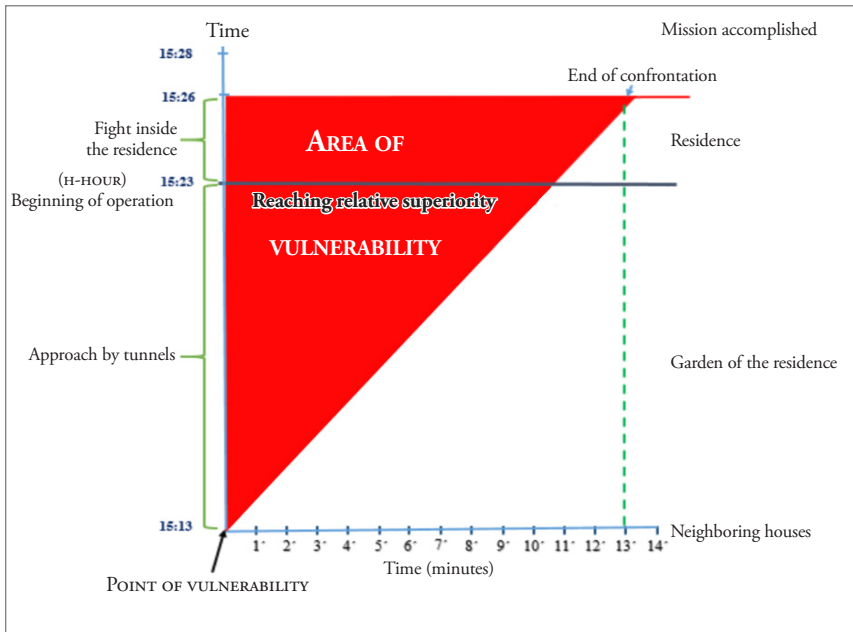


Figure 4. Area of vulnerability in Operation Chavín de Huántar
Source: Adapted from Álvarez (2011).

The intelligence actions carried out outside and inside the residence made it possible to determine the terrorists' vulnerabilities, which included: (i) not being aware that they were being listened to, (ii) the type and quantity of weapons they possessed, (iii) the location of their surveillance posts, (iv) the distribution of the hostages, (v) their arguments or disagreements, (vi) their psychological profiles, (vii) their routines, and (viii) the time and place they carried out their physical training. The intelligence also indicated our weaknesses, which were (i) that the house was located in a residential area, (ii) that it was in foreign territory that could cause a diplomatic conflict, and (iii) that we were under the watch of a large gathering of media. The intelligence recommended that the rescue operation be planned for the afternoon in order to obtain the element of surprise and reduce the area of vulnerability. Following the intelligence

recommendations, the entry was realized through the tunnels and other locations simultaneously to neutralize the terrorists as quickly as possible and prevent them from reacting; indoor combat techniques were used. According to the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDEHPUCP, 2008, p. 2), selective point shooting was used to neutralize the terrorists.

Regarding this, Admiral Luis Giampetri commented:

We all thought that the rescue was going to be at night. I couldn't conceive that they would do it in the daytime; until they started to play table football. That's when the possibility opened up. I never thought they'd enter from underneath the residence. Through a window, we saw a green line coming from one of the houses to the residence, and with the information provided by the newspaper *La República*, we realized with Tudela that the tunnel was being built. (L. Giampetri, comunicación personal, 20 de enero de 2016)

All the intelligence work was of paramount importance to the success of the operation.

This intelligence contributed to the timing and distribution of the firing on the target, particularly with the 14 snipers stationed around the residence, covering the blind spots that were out of range of direct fire from the raiding patrols. (Benavides, 2012, p. 81)

Referring to the beeper and the guitar, Admiral Luis Giampetri stated:

It was a spectacular idea. They must be forward-thinking people, to make my wife go to the SIN to sign one of the three guitars that entered the residence, with that they directed the guitar to me. Also, ten thermoses were admitted, each one prettier than the last, and as Serpa had a very big ego, he took it for his use without realizing that he had a microphone. Thanks to this, there was communication in a double sense, it was received by the beeper and transmitted by the guitar. [...] The SIN picked up about 5,000 communications; it was a very complicated and tense process. (L. Giampetri, comunicación personal, 20 de enero de 2016)

In this respect, Tolentino states:

The SIN had a direct contract with the [pager] company to provide us with a messaging service before we took over the residence [...]. This contract stipulated that its use was exclusively for national security, so direct coordination was made with its general manager, [...] who was asked for a direct line with its own exit to the pager, which was in the house, justifying this request as a use for the benefit of the national defense. (P. Tolentino, comunicación personal, 25 de noviembre de 2016)

All the intelligence-obtained information (satellite images, photographs, plans, elaborate models of the residence, electronic wiretapping, and information collected from the waste, such as napkins, newspapers, and their corresponding analysis) made

it possible to carry out accurate and timely procedures, to reduce unknown factors and travel times of the special forces, and to know the exact location of the terrorists and hostages inside the residence.

Tolentino expands on other details about the microphone system.

The U.S. Embassy provided us with microphones that we tried to install on broomsticks, but they were too big, and there was a risk that they would be discovered. They were asked again for microphones, but smaller, but they said they did not have them. In the face of this refusal, the head of the SIN blocked all the work being done by the DEA and the PNP in Peru, and they had to give us the required microphones. They took advantage of a circumstance in which Admiral Ibárcena handed a bible to Montesinos, to be handed to Admiral Giampetri because it was a birthday present and that is where, with the help of the U.S. Embassy, the first microphone was placed on one of the bible covers [...]. More and smaller microphones were made and infiltrated into every object we could. (P. Tolentino, comunicación personal, 25 de noviembre de 2016)

These and other testimonies from interviewees show that the technical and human intelligence developed by the government's intelligence services were key factors in the success of the operation.

Obtained within the opposition of objectives of the actors of this event, they allowed the military component to fill the information gaps and reduce tactical uncertainty to a minimum, avoiding the need for commanders to make decisions based on incomplete, imprecise, or contradictory information. (Benavides, 2012, p. 81)

However, the lack of a pacification policy in the governments prior to Alberto Fujimori's exposes the limited commitment to national defense. The defense policy was not considered a public policy to safeguard society from internal threats. The takeover of the residence by an MRTA command showed the country that the defeat by law and order enforcement on the subversion, after capturing its leaders and disrupting its bands, was only an initial success. It was won in the tactical but not the strategic or operational fields. The future of the country was in danger; the most serious attack in its history had taken place. Either the State fulfilled its objective of guaranteeing the nation's continuity, and the anti-terrorist policy achieved the desired success or Peru would once again be submerged in subversive violence.

The strategy implemented, in this case, was based on the military decision-making model, as the government had control of the situation at all times; this was supported by the empowerment of the SIN, which was carried out since the first government. The strategy adopted is summarised into respecting the principle of State authority and executing the release of the hostages through a peaceful or a military

solution. The government maintained autonomy in the decision-making process to solve this crisis as a free country, obtaining the support of Congress, political parties, the Church, the citizens in general, as well as the foreign community, with the exception of Cuba. The government offered to satisfy very minimal requirements, offering the terrorists a way out to some foreign country and the probable release of a very small number of imprisoned terrorists, but always insisting that they first lay down their arms and release all the hostages.

The release of the prisoners they requested was never negotiated. The military option was chosen at the end of the talks. Fujimori ordered the implementation of a military plan to solve the crisis, placing responsibility for the results of the entire strategy on the SIN.

The commands

The rescue operation was carried out by military personnel belonging to the 1st Brigade of Special Forces, recognized for its broad effectiveness and combat experience, supported by all the intelligence efforts provided by the SIN's military personnel. This personnel was organized into two of the four groups of the *Tenaz* patrol. SIN personnel filmed and photographed the actions; this was questioned by human rights bodies, which considered that they had been infiltrated to commit extrajudicial executions. However, this is commonly done by all the armies of the world in this type of operation to maintain a record for further analysis and learning.

Conclusions

The concepts set out in this article are useful for opening the debate on an issue that has yet to be addressed comprehensively by the State, that of having a State policy for dealing with crises caused by hostage-taking. It is a political duty to have a properly prepared intelligence apparatus, governed by tutelary institutions and accompanied by an efficient sociological apparatus. The professional and reserved action of the intelligence personnel involved in the development and execution of the Chavín de Huántar operation deserves recognition. This case should be deeply analyzed in the light of the Armed Forces' doctrine on subversion to formulate and implement a public policy of excellence aimed at maintaining the legitimacy and strict compliance with the rules for the use of force in hostage rescue operations.

The conclusion of the hostage crisis meant the success of the policy implemented by the government. It also strengthened the country's morale, raised the prestige of the Armed Forces at a national and international level, and demonstrated the importance and capacity of intelligence work, its patient, quiet, and effective work, which

culminated in ending the MRTA. This operation is considered a successful model for rescue operations in world history. The State, through Ministerial Resolution n.º 133-2010-MD/SG, instituted April 22 as the Day of Military Valor, with a ceremony to be held annually at the replica of the Japanese ambassador's residence and in all military garrisons. Similarly, and by Law 30554, the commandos who participated in Operation Chavín de Huántar were declared "heroes of democracy."

This article's first contribution is establishing national security as a public interest and, as such, it is not an exclusive responsibility of the State or its Armed Forces, but a right that generates duties and involves society as a whole. The rules must be known and understood by all, and, if necessary, there must be actors to verify their compliance and sanction their noncompliance. Thus, the case of a hostage crisis resolution calls for a multiplicity of national and international actors and interests, so coordination among them must be very close in order to (i) delimit actions, (ii) achieve economy of resources, (iii) achieve commitment to solutions, and (iv) guarantee the sustainability of the actions to be developed.

Within public interest, we also find the right to life, life expectancy, freedom, personal security, peace of mind, and access to opportunities; these are solely the responsibility of the government and its public officials. The overall success of this operation bolstered the public perception of its importance. It also improved the government's image, which was, at that time, deteriorated in the public opinion by the multiple denunciations of corruption; this was reverted and forgotten for an extended period. The effective and spectacular solution used to release the hostages and the minimum number of casualties changed the government's negative image. It can be said that the taking of the hostages, which produced a huge crisis in Peru, served, in the end, as a lifeline for the government's thanks to the heroism of its Armed Forces. The citizens massively supported the government's decision and felt proud of this operation.

The second contribution is the understanding that hostage crises are a complex social phenomenon that cannot be confronted with a single strategy such as repression. It requires the alignment of preventive control actions or military solutions with consistent public policies. Coordinated work is required between state institutions, as well as social managers and representatives of civil society and the community in general, to guarantee the effectiveness and confidence in the policies adopted. This approach indicates that the interrelationship between policies and other public policies to solve a hostage crisis is only possible when there is an integral vision of the notion of belonging and trust in government and the Armed Forces. The State must direct policies to solve hostage crises. They must be rational, integrated into all fields of human activity to avoid the conditions that give rise to these crises. They must be coherent and continuous over time to firmly consolidate the initial successes, agreed

upon by the government and society in general and based on the doctrines generated by the experiences of successful rescue operations carried out by security forces around the world.

A third contribution is an observation that the government must create enough trust to generate cooperation between all authorities and citizens. Therefore, policies must be two-way; it is essential to consolidate them by including the participation of the entire society, thus, generating public value. The analyses to arrive at the policies must be detailed, and populism must be averted with practical and intelligent actions. The terror syndrome must be avoided, as well as solutions that favor the use of force. This approach is based on the fact that public policies for dealing with hostage crises must not only be based on the defense of human rights but also be designed to guarantee them.

The fourth contribution is indicating that the State must create, based on the experience gained in Operation Chavín de Huántar, a Single Command for Special Operations that also includes the special forces of the National Police and provide it with the necessary budget to increase its operational excellence.

Lastly, there is evidence of the need to create a quality Peruvian doctrine in the field of special operations for the rescue of hostages. The experience gained by the State in solving a hostage crisis of such magnitude is a valuable contribution to the resolution of future hostage crises worldwide, as a serious public problem was legitimately solved. Furthermore, the external and internal political difficulties of the intervention were identified, and appropriate mechanisms were implemented to concretize the participation of the actors involved in such a crisis. A political-military solution to the public problem of kidnapping was generated, the resources available to the State to deal with the crisis were organized, and positive knowledge was generated to improve similar future actions in the Peruvian context or any other country.

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