Terrorism in Europe – from the definition to the present day

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ABSTRACT

The description undertaken attempts to investigate the threat of Islamic terrorism in Europe. This problem is still real, because the countries of the Old Continent participating in the so-called the war against global terrorism already experienced terrorist attacks on their territories. The main objective of this work is to determine the capabilities of the terrorist threat by examining the essence of the phenomenon of modern Islamic terrorism in the European area and the assessment of the threat. During the development of this description the author used different research methods, and the main criterion for their selection was a rationalization of the course and the possibility of obtaining objective results. Method of analysis and detailed examination of documents has been used as a gateway and adapted in the optimal way to achieve the desired result in the form of leaked conclusions. The leading element to the entire research process was a critical analysis of the literature on the subject of research. Literature and the sources from which were used in the study can be divided into several thematic segments: the history of Islam and the sources of Islamic fundamentalism, history and theory of terrorism, the sources of law in the context of counter-terrorism and policies in the field of counter-terrorism and the fight against this phenomenon. Literature research in the field of scientific studies in the context of the presented thematic sections, characterized by diverse accessibility, which consists of a number of items related to the Muslim religion and Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and the disciplines of law, as well as occurring much less frequently highly specialized positions describing the security system of anti-terrorist.

Keywords: Islamic extremism; terrorism; terrorist attack; history
1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic extremism is a challenge which must face the whole EU. It necessarily based on at the crossroads of culture and politics. Islamic fundamentalism, in the colloquial sense, associated with constantly pursued military action in favor of the Islamists. This situation causes an explosion of interest in this cultural phenomenon, also because of fear. Such situation, it can transform into open armed conflict between the Islamic world and the West [1]. Global jihad [2] is marked by a negative form of meaning, and the world is facing anxiously toward Muslim countries, waiting for the aftermath of another terrorist attack.

Modern terrorism has become the subject of social engineering, propaganda of governments and Islamic centers. This comes under the operation of propaganda and the so-called psychological warfare. Islamists lead more active information policy as a response to social engineering campaigns of the West, where people are treated Islam as a threat and an obstacle to social and economic transformation of the Arab world. Social and political activity of Muslims is seen as a manifestation of fundamentalism and the prelude to the religious conflicts and political [3]. Islamists propaganda glorifies fundamentalism, which causes further radicalization of views and motivates the attacks against the Western world [4]. In extreme variations of the Muslim religion, including Islamism and generated from its ideology, dominated by the following principles:

- to present its arguments and the world propitiation for their purposes,
- spreading the ideology of fighting and winning it not only followers, but also financial support, material and facilities,
- manipulating the societies of the West, mainly belonging to the so-called anti-terrorist coalition, involved in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan,
- excitation and intensification of the fear of the presence of potential terrorists is religiously-motivated islams environments are considered hostile.

Preparation of the European countries to assess the terrorist threat - at the moment - as insufficient. It is therefore immediately take the appropriate steps to improve the system of anti-terrorist protection (ranging from information exchange, having finished on joint counter-terrorism operations), taking into account the activities of all institutions that may find themselves faced with the need to respond to a terrorist incident.

2. AN ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP A DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

With the end of the twentieth century Islamic terrorism has become one of the greatest threats to world order. It can be compared to traditional forms of armed conflict, however, it operates mainly out of hiding, and his strength derive from scaring the world community. The boundary between terrorism and the war will continue to blur.

Consequently, preventing and becoming increasingly this phenomenon is important in the field of security and defense policy, the priority is the creation of specialized anti-terrorist units and neutralization of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery [5]. A definition that could explain the concept of terrorism brings many difficulties. There is no doubt that the most important feature is the fear of society against violence, or the threat of its
use. It is the fear tends to make concessions which expect terrorists. Another element of the
definition of terrorism is the political context of the act.

Politically motivated violence can be regarded as a distinctive feature of a terrorist from
an ordinary criminal who acts only for personal gain [6]. Study the phenomenon of terrorism
now aims to narrow its scope of meaning only to political terrorism. Previously, you could
extract crime terror, crime terror, terror of war or mental terror. The same issue also applies to
terrorism, and also terror sanctioned by the state. Remember also the political aspect of
terrorism is not clear. The concept of politics is sufficiently large to accommodate the human
attitudes that may have yet a completely different nature. Also for political scientists is very
difficult to define a policy area. Basically, it is virtually every aspect of our lives. It is
therefore necessary for the correct definition of the concept of terrorism, narrow area of policy
action to the realm of decision-making - terrorist attacks are intended to affect and influence,
moreover, to change a political decision. However, a political decision also has a broad
meaning, it can, however, restrict the non-random selection of an action or omission made by
the decision-making center.

As mentioned earlier, one of the characteristics of terrorism is the use of violence (or the
threat of its use). Another characteristic feature are the objects of attack. Some try to
distinguish them because of the motivation of the attackers, but this is virtually impossible,
because it is very difficult to determine the motivations that guide the making of attack (in
case of suicide bombers). It seems that a much better way to determine the object of terrorist
attacks is proposed by the US Department of State [7], the distinction between fighting
objects and non-fighting objects. The fighting objects are soldiers and civilian staff in the area
covered by the armed conflict, and non-fighting objects are civilians and soldiers outside the
service. Some of them include non-combatants armed soldiers in a place where is no-armed
conflict. However, there are some difficulties. Main problem is to define the term armed
conflict and answer for the question: where is the line between series of terrorist attacks and a
rise? For this reason, you should limit the scope of meaning aims non-combatants only to
people not involved in fighting (civilians, unarmed soldiers, police officers off duty, etc.).

The problem of defining terrorism appeared at a time when the concept began to appear
more frequently in the international arena. This resulted mainly from the pejorative coloration
of terrorism and using it as a tool of political struggle. Because international politics is
abrasion of interests, so what may seem right for one country (or social group), it does not
have to be right for another. Another reason for the trouble of finding a single, binding
definition of terrorism is complexity and dynamics of development - terrorism is not one
unchangeable form, but is constantly evolving - adapting to new conditions and circumvent
the system components to counteract him. It seems that a few decades ago hijacking a
passenger plane and the suicide attack on an object seemed to be impossible. Today we are
aware that this is real and contemporary terrorism knows no boundaries - neither moral, nor
legal.

Most definitions of terrorism highlights two basic elements: the use of force as a means of
exerting pressure and political or ideological nature of the actions of perpetrators. The
feature that distinguishes terrorism but from other forms of violence, is the message behind
what he brings. Its own definition of terrorism has almost every research institution, as well as
government agencies which contribute to safety or international organizations guarding peace
and security. Despite this fact, all of these institutions occupy a similar position: terrorism
must be countered with all possible means [8].
The difficulty in finding a common definition of terrorism stems from: a call to arbitrariness in the use of the term; negative color and a close relationship with politics, where it is used to fight for influence. In defining terrorism, often used a kind of manipulation - it is associated with evil and it's easy to call political opponents terrorists. It should be noted that the term is often also used by terrorists to determine the actions of governments that fight them. Examples are Palestinians who called Israeli army operation like state terrorism [9].

The problem of interchangeable definition of terrorism has existed since the beginning of the use of this term. No possibility of accurate and accepted by all definitions becomes a problem on an international scale, it is difficult to reach a consensus on this issue, and thus effectively fight terrorism by using the tools of political and legal. Alex Schmid, made a statement of its major features (elements). He did so on the basis of 109 different definitions of the term [10]. Based on these studies presented the following definition of terrorism, that is: terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperilled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought [11].

Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism, compiled by Alex P. Schmid:

- Terrorism refers, on the one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties.

- Terrorism as a tactic is employed in three main contexts: (i) illegal state repression, (ii) propagandistic agitation by non-state actors in times of peace or outside zones of conflict and (iii) as an illicit tactic of irregular warfare employed by state- and non-state actors.

- The physical violence or threat thereof employed by terrorist actors involves single-phase acts of lethal violence (such as bombings and armed assaults), dual- phased life-threatening incidents (like kidnapping, hijacking and other forms of hostage-taking for coercive bargaining) as well as multi-phased sequences of actions (such as in ‘disappearances’ involving kidnapping, secret detention, torture and murder).

- The public (-ized) terrorist victimization initiates threat-based communication processes whereby, on the one hand, conditional demands are made to individuals, groups, governments, societies or sections thereof, and, on the other hand, the support of specific constituencies (based on ties of ethnicity, religion, political affiliation and the like) is sought by the terrorist perpetrators.

- At the origin of terrorism stands terror – instilled fear, dread, panic or mere anxiety - spread among those identifying, or sharing similarities, with the direct victims, generated
by some of the modalities of the terrorist act – its shocking brutality, lack of discrimination, dramatic or symbolic quality and disregard of the rules of warfare and the rules of punishment.

– The main direct victims of terrorist attacks are in general not any armed forces but are usually civilians, non-combatants or other innocent and defenceless persons who bear no direct responsibility for the conflict that gave rise to acts of terrorism.

– The direct victims are not the ultimate target (as in a classical assassination where victim and target coincide) but serve as message generators, more or less unwittingly helped by the news values of the mass media, to reach various audiences and conflict parties that identify either with the victims’ plight or the terrorists’ professed cause.

– Sources of terrorist violence can be individual perpetrators, small groups, diffuse transnational networks as well as state actors or state-sponsored clandestine agents (such as death squads and hit teams).

– While showing similarities with methods employed by organized crime as well as those found in war crimes, terrorist violence is predominantly political – usually in its motivation but nearly always in its societal repercussions.

– The immediate intent of acts of terrorism is to terrorize, intimidate, antagonize, disorientate, destabilize, coerce, compel, demoralize or provoke a target population or conflict party in the hope of achieving from the resulting insecurity a favourable power outcome, e.g. obtaining publicity, extorting ransom money, submission to terrorist demands and/or mobilizing or immobilizing sectors of the public.

– The motivations to engage in terrorism cover a broad range, including redress for alleged grievances, personal or vicarious revenge, collective punishment, revolution, national liberation and the promotion of diverse ideological, political, social, national or religious causes and objectives.

– Acts of terrorism rarely stand alone but form part of a campaign of violence which alone can, due to the serial character of acts of violence and threats of more to come, create a pervasive climate of fear that enables the terrorists to manipulate the political proces [12].

Trying to develop its own definition of terrorism, according to the author, we should organize the above-mentioned characteristics of terrorism and limit it to a few key questions, namely:

– Who was - the initiator, the spiritual leader, organizer, financier, or contractor - assassination?
– How the attack was prepared (completed)?
– Where (in what place) attack has been prepared (completed)?
– What means (what kind of weapon) attack has been carried out?
– Why there was a terrorist attack? [question about: sources, themes, etc.]
- Who /what was the goal, who/ what manifestation of terrorism concerned? [question about the entity / entities, the object / objects of attack]
- With what effect the attack was carried out? [question about the consequences].

3. ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN EUROPE

The essence of modern terrorism is that it impacts on the innocent people, and its source lies far beyond borders the country where the attack is carried out. Significant threats from the point of view of European security are the risks of terrorist attacks. Security policies in a context of most European countries is based mainly on NATO guarantees. The main purpose of this Organization is to guarantee freedom and security all its members in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations [13], based on principle cooperation between states. The essence of the changes in the security system involves shifting the focus from the classic risks (open armed conflict) on the-threatening abnormal (asymmetric) – terroristic [14]. These risks may affect both citizens and facilities, and services and institutions essential for the smooth functioning of the state.

Terrorism is a word more common in international conflicts and war propaganda, where its meaning slowly blurred. Page, which will impose his opponent called a terrorist, indirectly imposing its view of the conflict, trying to reconcile the feelings of the public with their own political interest, and thus interpretation of terrorism [15]. Some researchers say the phenomenon of terrorism continues, that the danger comes not from the terrorists themselves, but on the contrary: the country, the armed forces and police [16]. Compared with the ruthlessness and destructive potential of countries or even natural disasters, terrorism is only a violation of public order.

Assuming so general that terrorism is the use of force or threat by an individual or group to influence both the authority and the public, as well as a group of people or individuals, we can take to attempt to specify, its characteristics. These include: the use by terrorists of force as a means of action; recognizing that the aim of the attack is to create a sense of threat in the society; spectacular action, which cause a psychological effect; reduction of authority and expose her helplessness; measures aimed at getting publicity, not the destruction of the apparatus of power; strategic objective is the transformation of society, which will carry out the mass determined when the power of fighting terrorism will begin to restrict their rights.

Factor that influenced the development of Islamic fundamentalism, while contributing to the rise of extremist Islamic groups, it is primarily a crisis of identity in Muslim societies, related to, among others, the loss, created as a result do not keep up too fast modernization of some Arab states and the collapse of the so-called the doctrine of socialism Arabic [17]. Islamic fundamentalism is an expression of rebellion parts of Islamic societies against the ubiquitous Western values and patterns. Radical factions of Islamic fundamentalism are not at the same time free from totalitarian ideas, and to achieve its objectives exploit terrorism. According to one extreme ideologues of this movement, the West is considered impious and threatening Islam, therefore it must be fought also with force. The object of special hostility of the United States fundamentalists are identified as the center of paganism and godlessness of the Western world [18].
Islamic terrorism motivated by religious considerations is based on a completely different value system than the one prevailing until recently. Unlike secular terrorists, Islamic terrorists in a completely different way guided by political considerations. They aim mainly to the destruction of the Western political systems and cultural patterns, and not as terrorists for political change in political relations (with the exception of groups of colored anarchist).

With the appearance of global terrorism - a global jihad - do not apply such concepts as neutral territory and the right of citizens of neutral countries. In the current situation of each country in the world, which condemns terrorism and fights against it, it’s exposed to attack. Islamic terrorist networks often carry out actions in countries that often have nothing to do with the case, which is contested by terrorists. Many countries report that it is the fight against Islamic terrorism, but also some of these countries believe that one of the varieties of terrorism, the wider struggle for national liberation, regardless of the methods used by Islamists, can be justified.

The best explanation for the false justification of Islamic terrorism is a statement of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the United Nations General Assembly in November 1974: (...) The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers and the colonialists cannot possibly be called terrorist, otherwise the American people in their struggle for liberation from the British colonialists would have been terrorists; the European resistance against the Nazis would be terrorism, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples would also be terrorism, and many of you who are in this Assembly hall were considered terrorists. This is actually a just and proper struggle consecrated by the United Nations Charter and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As to those who fight against the just causes, those who wage war to occupy, colonize and oppress other people, those are the terrorists. Those are the people whose actions should be condemned, who should be called war criminals: for the justice of the cause determines the right to struggle (...) [19].

Depending on the motives, the terrorists strike at well-defined objects (goals), mainly civilians. This is the main factor that distinguishes terrorism from other types of political violence (eg. the partisans). It uses the vulnerability of civilians on anxiety and immediate media reaction caused by attacks against ordinary citizens. Terrorism usually accentuates that is intentionally directed against civilians. It is worth to recall the so-called non-combatant targets [20]. It is therefore necessary to consider not only the object of attack, but also the circumstances and purpose. Even seemingly bloody attacks on a random group of people meet the preconceived terrorist aspirations. Terrorists carry out their attacks with premeditation and careful planning. The act of violence is so conceived to communicate the message, is made in a way that reflects the specific objectives and motivations of a terrorist organization, it corresponds to its capabilities and resources, and also takes into account the audience to which it is addressed.

Specific terrorist activities leading Islamic groups motivated by religion. Terrorism motivated in whole or in part by religious imperatives are used distinctly different ways of legitimacy and justification than secular terrorism, and this in turn leads to a much greater bloodshed and destruction. Islamic fundamentalist groups primarily use mass terrorism. Their violence is directed against persons professing faith different from that professed by
themselves. Islamic terrorist organizations use the force for two reasons: indirectly - by the terrorist attacks aiming to intimidate a larger group of people and forcing the authorities to refrain from Western countries or to take certain actions; directly - in order to eliminate as many infidels, organizing attacks on a large scale or by using the tactics of murders of prominent persons from the political life of countries as allies of fugitive Western countries.

Goals that Islamists want to achieve as a result of a single terrorist attack include: to draw public attention to the fight against terrorist network and popularize its program; intimidation of the political elite of the country or certain social or ethnic groups, or society as a whole, so as to force the reactions beneficial to terrorists; the task of the enemy as the greatest loss as material and people; punish state representatives and political opponents for their moves, directed against the interests of the group with which they identify terrorists. Password formulated by the Islamic fundamentalists also arouse anxiety among parts of the Muslim community in many Arab countries (eg. Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Morocco). This situation testifies to the complexity of the world of Islam.

Integral, and also the main characteristic of terrorism is violence, that is the truest sense of the use of physical coercion; deliberately creating a direct threat to the life or health of persons or to the integrity of physical objects (buildings, means of communication, etc.). Terrorism is also associated with the threat of violence, which is related to psychological aspects of this phenomenon. There not always comes a bloody attack. Enough to that the terrorist organization will extend their demands to create chaos and fear among the public. Except for the use of violence by terrorist organizations, it is called cyber-terrorism, which is devoid of signs of the use of force.

Islamic Terrorists use fear of the people who will do anything to bloody attacks did not happen. So at least they are confident the terrorists. We are dealing here with a clear demarcation victim and the aim [21]. By this the groups which use terrorism violate basic rights and rules of war codified, among others, Conventions of Geneva [22] and Hague [23], which: forbid the taking of civilian hostages; impose rules of treatment of soldiers captured or who surrendered; for unlawful consider reprisals against civilians and prisoners of war; recognize the neutral territories and the right of citizens of neutral countries; maintain the inviolability of diplomats.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The beginning of international terrorism, many researchers of this phenomenon assumes the date July 22, 1968 [24]. In that day, three Palestinian terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, PLO faction) hijacked Israeli airline El Al flying from Rome to Tel Aviv. Kidnapping of aircraft happened before, but until now they had a different purpose and character [25]. The kidnapping of the Israeli aircraft had an international dimension, because:

- was a political statement to the Israeli Government,
- El Al plane line was not accidental goal, because it was a symbol of the State of Israel,
- the kidnappers were not citizens of the country, which led the fight,
- terrorist incident took place on the territory of several countries,
terrorists realize how great resonance in the media can make the terrorist incident carry out outside one country.

Purpose for which the Muslim terrorists are seeking is typically politically motivated: regime change, the reigning government, or specific political decision-makers; change the direction of economic and social policies; the struggle for independence, the creation of a new state, or prevent such changes. Acts of violence committed against the civilian population, who have no political goals, in most cases, are ordinary criminal offenses. For political purposes can also include ideological and religious motivation. But the notion of the political objective is quite general, to pass to it also targets of religious and ideological.

Islamic terrorists refers Quranic verses and the decisions of their spiritual leaders, who interpret it [26]. Most terrorist groups want to destroy the world of the infidels (mostly identified with Israel and the US), and in its place build a country based on sharia law [27], functioning according to the Quran. Islam simply does not know the distinction between the sacred and the profane. Muslim terrorists want to destroy the balance of political forces and create a new political order. Some of Islamic terrorist networks want to destroy the Jewish state, and in its place create an Islamic [28]. Fundamentalists do not see differences between religion and politics. In Islam, every aspect of social and political life is saturated with the teachings of the Koran, so in the Muslim world it is difficult to talk about politics without mentioning religion. All factions of modern Islam are consistent in one, namely that by means of this religion can solve all the major problems of socio-political era.

The structure of terrorist organizations is diverse [29]. It can only be hierarchical in nature, or a member of such a group can result even with equality. But always there is a close link between the various actors groups, which are assigned specific tasks. In this sense, the terrorist organizations remind organizations defined in the management theory.

Biography

Wojciech J. Janik – Ph.D., university lecturer, a professional soldier, author of several monographs and dozens of scientific articles in the field of modern terrorism, national security and war theory with particular reference to the hybrid war.

References


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[18] Ibidem, pp. 23 and next.


[27] Sharia is the basic Islamic legal system derived from the religious precepts of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Hadith. The term sharia means a body of moral and religious law derived from religious prophecy, as opposed to human legislation.


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