THE ESSENCE OF MODERN TERRORISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSION OF THE NATURE OF TERRORISM

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Abstract: Terrorism as a phenomenon has a complex structure in which ideological, social, religious, ethnic, psychological and other elements are intertwined. Modern terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that successfully adapts to the political and economic situation. Effective counteraction is beyond the power of any independent specialized institution or individual country. Understanding of the concept of terrorism is linked to the analysis of the common features of modern terrorism. Based on the content of ideology and motivation, as well as the specifics of the methods of action, there are differences between terrorism based on left and right ideologies, on nationalism and separatism, and with different religious motivations.

Keywords: concept of terrorism; counter-terrorism and radicalization; flipped classroom.

Introduction

Interest in terrorism is growing in direct proportion to the victims of the attacks. Strategies to combat it are constantly being drafted, legislation is being changed to punish perpetrators of crimes, but this cannot eliminate terrorism. The constant terrorist attacks, the numerous casualties and damage caused by terrorism make it one of the most terrible and sinister phenomena that exist today.

Terrorism as a phenomenon has a complex structure in which ideological, social, religious, ethnic, psychological and other elements are intertwined. In addition, very often terrorism as a form of violence is associated with war, guerrilla warfare, crime, and similar destructive for the society activities and actions. As a result of its complex structure, there is no generally accepted definition of terrorism. When defining terrorism, we need to consider the fact that the information age is changing the character of existing security systems, forcing them to work in a rich information environment, and to create and implement a number of new complex policies, missions and tasks. Modern terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that successfully adapts to the political and economic situation. Effective counteraction is beyond the power of any independent specialized institution or individual country. Real results in the fight against terrorism can only be achieved through joint efforts and the creation of legislation that is effective and counteracts terrorist acts and threats.

All of the above leads to serious difficulties in the legal grounds for the fight against terrorism, because if there is no definition, there is no punishment.

The concept of terrorism

Understanding of the concept of **terrorism** is linked to the analysis of the common features of modern terrorism. Based on the content of ideology and motivation, as well as on the specifics of the methods of action, there are differences between terrorism based on left and right ideologies, on nationalism and separatism, and with different religious motivations.

The new global and asymmetric threats are posed by international terrorism, insurgency, organized crime, the proliferation of dangerous technologies and components of weapons of mass destruction, actions threatening the state, information manipulation and misinformation, pose a significant danger to both global security and each national security.

There have seen a series of crises, complex emergencies and terrorist acts in the Member States of the European Union (EU) in the last few years. The risks and dangers in Europe are

growing in numbers and character. The attacks that took place in Europe, in 2012 in Bulgaria (Burgas), 2014, 2015 and 2016 in France (Paris, Nice) and in Belgium (Brussels) are proof that an adequate response is needed from each country.

At the same time, the essential nature of terrorism as a specific type of action and approach must be considered. While classical warfare is based on physical dominance and victory, terrorism is an asymmetric approach aimed at psychological impact.

In its modern manifestations, terrorism increasingly relies on synergy between different influences and approaches. This allows the resulting impact to exceed significantly the sum of the effects of the single forms and approaches. In addition to the traditional attacks on unarmed individuals and public facilities, the development of Islamic State has shown that it is possible the ambitions of terrorist organizations are to reach the levels of classic military formations and even establishment of a state entity. Understandably, Islamic State focuses the attention of the world community, but this does not exclude the study and analysis of still existing terrorist groups with different motivations. The increased migrant wave as a result of the destabilization in the Middle East, and the following economic, social and civilizational problems caused the resurgence of right and left extremism.

The religion-politics interrelations separate religious wings or sects in the main religious denominations. It should be noted here that in current conditions most organizations with religious motivation are based on Islam and this has its logical explanation. The development of each cause, ideology or its higher form – religion (for short we will call it ***the Cause***) follows almost the same pattern (model). It is characterized by a birth, a period of enthusiasm and increase in followers, a period of enthusiasm and radicalization, a warlike period, and a climax which is inevitably followed by marginalization. It is worth noting that during the warlike period there is a desire for rapid and mass dissemination and imposition of the Cause, and this is accompanied by the deep conviction that this is in the interest of the people who are forced to accept the Cause. At the climax, all followers sincerely believe and personally accept any Cause issue.

No matter the pattern of development, leaders emerge at an early stage. The spread and expansion of the Cause brings power over people and resources, and power inevitably turns leaders into elite. The more the power of the Cause grows, the more the elite moves away from the masses; thus, the social, economic and social differences increase and become clear and noticeable. Of course, this cannot be an endless process. At a certain critical moment, the connection between the elite and the masses becomes thinner until it breaks. The trust of the masses in the elite is compromised, and this in turn erodes faith in the Cause itself. This is also the beginning of marginalization.

The lifespan of a Cause is determined by its scale. When it comes to a specific idea, with clearly defined and physically achieved goals, the life of the Cause can last for months. With political causes, this period can be from several years to decades, even centuries. However, when it comes to higher Causes, such as the world's major religions the lifespan can be as long as millennia. The attempt to compare the development of Christianity and Islam over time following the suggested model confirms not only similarities and verification of the described regularities, but also the fact that Islam is currently at its climax. That is why this Cause is most suitable to be used as an argument, and accordingly, when we talk about religiously motivated terrorism in modern conditions, in most cases it is based on Islam. One should take into account the specifics of the ideological construct of a given religion which have an additional supporting or deterrent effect on the process.

It is necessary to emphasize that the embracing of a Cause and the use of violence for its purposes can also happen at the state level. Here are a number of examples such as:
- death squads in Brazil;
- the systematic suppression of the Indians in Guatemala;

- the actions of the Argentine Military Regime;
- the early years of the Pinochet regime in Chile;
- the brutal anti-terrorist and counterinsurgency operations of the Peruvian Armed Forces;
- the violence of the Algerian army during the military regime (it should be noted that this period was also characterized by active guerrilla and terrorist activities by members of the banned Islamic Salvation Front);
- the use of terror during the fourteen-year dictatorship of Charles Taylor in Liberia;
- the dictatorships of Francisco Macias Nguema in Equatorial Guinea and Idi Amin Dada in Uganda;
- the civil war in Sierra Leone;
- The terror in Burundi during the rule of Tutsi
- the genocide in Rwanda and its impact on neighboring Congo;
- the massacre of 10,000 Sunnis in Hama by the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Assad in 1982;
- the systematic application of terror by Saddam Hussein, especially with regard to the Kurds, including Operation Anfal, the Halabja chemical attack on Kurds in 1988 and the suppression of Kurds and Shiites in 1991;
- the Cambodian Genocide;
- terror during the Chinese Cultural Revolution;
- the massacre of between 300,000 and 500,000 communists or suspects as communists from the Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1965.

This list is not exhaustive. As the political scientist Paul Wilkinson puts it, torture is "the ultimate form of individualized terror." The examples above give reason for a number of terrorism experts to define state terrorism as a separate type of terrorism.

A few relatively small-scale terrorist attacks have taken place in the region of the Western Balkans in recent years. In 2015, in BiH, a man attacked a police station in Zvornik, leaving one police officer killed and two others injured. Later that year, in a suburb of Sarajevo, two members of the BiH Armed Forces were killed and then others on the scene were injured when the 34-year-old assailant tried to escape. These attacks followed previous terrorist events in the country in 1997, 2003, 2010 and 2011.

In Kosovo, five people were arrested in 2015 attempting to poison the main water supply for Pristina. Two of the individuals were returned foreign fighters from Syria. While the charges for poisoning the water were dropped, they were given stiff sentences of 10 to 13 years each, for planning terrorist acts against the constitutional order.

Macedonia saw a security incident in 2015, too, along its border with Kosovo, when approximately 40 people 'seized weapons, ammunition, and radio communication supplies from a border police station.' The police response resulted in the death of eight police officers and 10 people from the group. Also, that year, an improvised explosive device was left outside a court building in Macedonia, and a series of small explosions were detonated outside government buildings and political party offices.

In 2016, in a somewhat bizarre incident in Albania, a man was arrested for attempting to 'pull three people into his car over a two-hour period while proclaiming, 'Allah Akbar,' 'I have been sent by Allah,' and 'I want to kill you all.' Should this officially be treated as a religiously-driven act, the event will become the first instance of terrorism in Albania.

What all the cases presented above have in common is the political motivation and the proclamation of a certain ideology, religion or ethnic rights as a cause which plays a strong role as a stimulant and serves the purpose of manipulation and violence.

From all the above, it can be concluded that the argument about the multifaceted nature of theorism as a phenomenon and the objective impossibility to reach a uniform and generally accepted definition is confirmed.

NATO definitions of terrorism and counter-terrorism

Although there is no generally accepted definition of terrorism, we can present NATO's definitions on counter-terrorism from the NATO agreed Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism (CT)[1] „ For the purposes of this concept, the terms Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism are defined as follows, with the latter being established as a new overarching term for all efforts related to preventing and fighting terrorism:

a. Terrorism. The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.

b. Counter-Terrorism. All preventive, defensive and offensive measures taken to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property against terrorist threats and/or acts, to respond to terrorist acts. In the frame of the NATO Comprehensive Approach, this can be combined with or followed by measures enabling recovery after terrorist acts.

These definitions are not NATO agreed and differ from those terrorism-related definitions in Reference G. A submission has been made to the NATO Terminology Office to update NATO terminology in line with Paragraph 7."

The analysis of the definition shows that terrorism is a form of violence or a threat of violence, subordinated to or justified by a specific cause – political, religious or ideological. The second emphasis is on the purpose of the violence, namely submission of the public consciousness through fear and shock in the interest of the cause. In addition to the emerging features of terrorism, the need to refine the definition is clear, as it is scientifically unacceptable to define an object, phenomenon or process with the same word used to name the object, phenomenon or process. In our case, if we consider the content of the term TERROR – derived from the Latin verb *terrere* to frighten, to terrify, we will see that a tautology is formed and that is why it is necessary to refine the definition.

With regard to the understanding of the concept of counter-terrorism, the use of the word 'Counter' is of importance. According to the definition, the term counter-terrorism includes all possible preventive, offensive and defensive measures. The basic meaning of the terms in the Bulgarian language with the prefix 'Counter' is an action, which is a reaction to another action or event that has already taken place: counterattack, counteroffensive, counter-coup, counter-revolution and others. This in turn creates ambiguity and a lack of clear distinction between the various forms of counter-terrorism and especially between preventive and reactive measures.

If we trace and analyze the development of NATO terminology in the latest version of the Counter-terrorism Concept[2], we will see that despite some additions which are mainly regarding the response and recovery after terrorist acts, the need for refinement of the term remains as identified in the 2016 version:

„The terms Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism definitions are agreed upon per AAP-6 (Edition 2019).

a Terrorism. The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.

b Counter-Terrorism. All preventive, defensive and offensive measures taken to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property against terrorist threats and/or acts, and

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[1] NATO, *MC Concept for Counter-Terrorism - Final Decision on MC 0472/1*, 6 January 2016 MC 0472/1.
[2] *MC 0472_1_CT Concept DRAFT 2.2* – 2020.

to respond to terrorist acts. Note: In the frame of the NATO Comprehensive Approach, these measures can be combined with or followed by measures enabling recovery after terrorist acts".

All publications on terrorism share the view that it is a form of violence. Regarding its other characteristics, there is a great variety of opinions. For example, its goal is defined as causing fear, intimidation, achieving political, economic, ethnic goals, gaining popularity, and more. There is a great diversity when defining terrorism characteristics of means and organization in over a hundred definitions. The most common elements in those definitions are "violence" and "force", found in 83.5% of the definitions, followed by "political" – 65%, "fear" – 51%, "threat" – 47%.

Based on the known definitions of terrorism, a generalized definition of terrorism can be proposed: *politically motivated activity, incriminated by domestic and international law, which uses violence against citizens to achieve its goals*.

Political motivation means that the activity is aimed at taking power:
- in the country, or part of it – e.g., Palestinian organizations.
- in several countries (regions) - African organizations.
- in the world - "Islamic State", „Al Qaeda".

When organizations cannot take the power, they seek to change some aspects of politics (internal or international), for example, cessation of hostilities, securing more political rights, and so on. When there is no political motivation in an activity which includes violence, this activity cannot be defined as terroristic. Therefore, violence used by criminals, or by representatives of organized crime, cannot be defined as terrorism, because in these cases there are usually economic or personal purposes.

Political motivation is found in all major types of terrorism - left-wing extremist, right-wing extremist, separatist (ethnic), religious. For this reason, there is no need to add "ethnic", "religious" or other goals to the definition.

Unlike legitimate political organizations, terrorists use violence to seize power. There is also violence in other social phenomena – war between states, civil wars, guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the differences between terrorist violence and other types of violence need to be clarified.

On this basis, as well as on the basis of modern examples of terrorist activity, an attempt can be made to derive and suggest a definition of terrorism: *Politically motivated activity, incriminated by domestic and international law, which involves violence against citizens to achieve its goals*.

The following main characteristics that distinguish terrorist activity from other types of violence can also be suggested:

Political motivation – each terrorist act or activity is based on a political motive. Most often the driving emotion is the sense of injustice and a desire to change the state system or the political (religious) system, or desire for power and control over resources and others. It is worth mentioning that even in the most recent examples of acts committed by individuals, the so-called "lone wolves", their motivation is based on affect caused by a sense of injustice, or a desire to identify oneself with an idea or group (terrorist, religious, political, including individual movements with specific causes, etc.), or the wish to become noticeable, as well as to contribute to the accomplishment of the accepted cause with the terrorist act.

Publicity is the second characteristic of terrorism. Since the political goal cannot be achieved without establishing control over the society, group or population in a certain region, the main goal is to spread the results of the terrorist act as wide as possible. In almost all cases, a point for monitoring and filming the terrorist act is established. Next, the information, very often additionally manipulated and with added elements (sound, inscriptions, messages, symbols, etc.), which enhance the psychological impact, is disseminated/broadcast with the use of various media techniques. This is the basic method used in the Islamic State media campaign. The distribution/broadcast of video materials and photos from attacks, executions and tortures, through the media, the Internet and other media channels, increases the effect of the acts in a

geometric progression and allows the achievement of the goal by terrorist organizations at a very low cost. This raises the question of the involvement of public media in the spread of the information and the degree to which public media should inform society, because there is a certain moment after which the media can become (willingly or unwillingly) accomplices in the terrorist act.

Indiscriminate and mass casualties – Unlike other forms of armed confrontations, terrorism most often targets innocent people. In some cases, depending on the specific purposes of the terrorist act, the target could be representatives of a particular ethnic group or religion. What is more, the planners and perpetrators of terrorist acts are not interested in the number of victims; on the contrary, very often they aim at masses of people. This characteristic complements the above described first and second characteristics. Very often this is the leading goal, which neglects the importance of traditionally respected sites, such as religious temples, health facilities, children's centers, etc. An example of this is the cascading terrorist attack with improvised explosive devices on a mosque in the Yemeni capital during Friday prayers, and the armed attack and random shooting of doctors and helpless patients in a hospital in Sanaa. Both attacks were filmed and the recordings were broadcast in the Internet.

Intentional cruelty – this characteristic is directly related to the desire to cause shock and awe as a result of the exerted violence; its main purpose is to intensify the desired effect in combination with the other characteristics.

The suggested main characteristics of terrorism are the basis for a classification of the types of terrorism. Such classification is essential for the successful identification and analysis of a terrorist activity or a specific act and for taking decisions on an adequate response of the security system.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a strategic risk and this means that national security systems must address this risk and establish the necessary regulatory, financial, informational and human capacity for early warning, prevention, response, counteraction and effective management of its consequences. Countering such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon requires political will and decisions that require vision, strategy, leadership, statehood, as well as focusing the entire national security system on society and its individual citizens. This presupposes a strategic level of counteraction and engagement of serious managerial and institutional resources and the efforts of the strategic management of the state.

Moreover, all these unique policies and measures must be in the spirit and subject to the main regulatory documents: doctrinal and legal basis. On the other hand, the counteraction of terrorist or paramilitary groups or individual cells may face a new and unexpected enemy for the territory of the country, namely the environment and the local population. Those who conduct an operation may find themselves in the dilemma of "implementing preventive measures to counter terrorism or comply with the law and respect the rights of the country's citizens." In the uncertainty, asymmetry and network centricity of modern combat operations, commanders have to creatively apply the principles of the use of their subordinate forces and means[3]. This requires a complete rethinking of possible crisis options, reassessment of the environment with specific characteristics of the regions, as well as making the necessary changes in plans and procedures for the use of formations by the Armed Forces of NATO countries or in allied format.

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[3] Gradev K, *The Influence of Hybrid Threats on the Principles of War*, Yearbook of the Faculty of Command and Staff 1/2015. Sofia: Military Academy "G. S. Rakovski". 2015. pp. 265-275.

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