The Transformation of Terrorism and New Strategies

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Summary

In many states and their national security strategies, modern terrorism is marked as one of the main challenges. Aside from that, in many multilateral security documents terrorism is stated as one of the main challenges to global security. One can say that present-day terrorism in many aspects affects our security, as well as our general social and economic development. The understanding of this phenomenon, its development, its way of functioning, possible transformations and new forms is the necessary precondition for designing efficient counter-terrorist strategies. It seems that in the last several years we have been witnessing a new transformation of terrorism – it is becoming a threat that will be difficult to defeat with the resources and instruments that have so far been used in the fight against terrorism.

Key words: modern terrorism, mega-terrorism, multilateral security, information age, counter-terrorism

Introduction

In the last several years, terrorism and terrorist organizations have undergone certain changes we can identify as a process of "decentralization", which many analysts believe to be the key characteristics of the transformation of modern terrorism.[1] Such a conclusion is based on the changes perceived in the activities of Al-Qaeda, the main terrorist organization of today. During its establishment and through its further activity, which reached its peak in the September 11th 2001 attack, Al-Qaeda represented a unified organization with its own headquarters and activity tactics. Osama bin Laden and his associates directly influenced and supervised terrorist trainings in the camps situated on the Afghan territory. When terrorist actions were

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[1] For more detail, see Russell and Reid, 2006; Kegley, 2003; Combs, 2003; Stern, 2000; Lesser et al., 1999; Laqueur, 1999; Hoffman, 1998.

being planned, individuals and groups were coming from that very area to pursue their missions. Many of them came to the Afghan territory from other countries and then returned to their countries of origin or to the countries in which terrorist attacks were to be held. At the time, Al-Qaeda was the main organizer of all activities directed to the pursuit of terrorist attacks.

However, such a *modus operandi* proved to be inefficient in ensuring operative flexibility, which led to gradual decentralization. In the new system, the headquarters lost its operative function, which was taken over by different "branches" around the world. Al-Qaeda was thus transformed from an operative group to a global movement. This transformation made possible a global geographical distribution of the terrorist organization, at the same time reducing its abilities of centralized planning and organization of certain actions. The headquarters became more focused on the questions of global promotion of the movement, while the local franchises retained the tasks of planning and pursuit of terrorist actions. Today, we are facing terrorist organizations and terrorism labelled by Walter Laqueur as "nuisance terrorism" (Laqueur, 1999).

Modern countries identified terrorism as one of the greatest threats to national security and undertook a number of measures aimed at reducing the possibility of new terrorist attacks. The measures seem to be successful, since the terrorists, after the Madrid and London attacks, have not managed to pursue a single large attack outside the territory of the unstable part of the world. The local franchises have not managed to maintain the level of deadliness set in the time when all terrorist attacks were directly organized by the headquarters.

However, these facts should not mislead us to conclude that counter-terrorist measures are successful. The Western world is still very vulnerable to terrorist attacks, regardless of all the measures taken in the fight against terrorism. Intelligence estimates warn us that in Western countries there is a network of "sleeping" terrorists, who can be activated to pursue terrorist attacks. However, the same estimates indicate a lessened ability of terrorists to pursue a strategic terrorist attack similar to that of September 11th 2001 or the attacks in Madrid and London. However, their capability to pursue a deadly attack with civilian victims has still not been severely reduced. On the contrary, it is estimated that the above-mentioned decentralization led to the development of new abilities in the terrorist network, mainly focused on the possibility of wider geographical activity (Silvers and Epstein, 2002).

Having in mind the above-mentioned points, we can conclude that modern terrorism has evolved in organization, as well as in its other forms. Many factors have influenced its transformation. James S. Albritton believes that "we are living in a radically new age of global terrorism and we must seek significantly new ways to understand the nature of terrorism and its consequences" (Albritton, 2006). During

the creation of counter-terrorist strategies, special care should be given to the entire human environment and the global processes that affect the transformation of society, as well as the transformation of the terrorism phenomenon. Taking into account the constant transformation and adjustment of terrorism, approaches in the fight against terrorism should not rely on the *status quo* policy. Accordingly, this paper is directed towards the analysis of the phenomenon indicating the transformation of terrorism and the need to redefine the existing *status quo* approaches in the fight against it: the information revolution, the communication potentials of terrorism, and the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the mass media.

The information revolution, which gained its momentum in the second half of the 20th century, affects all spheres of the global community and stimulates their transformation. The information technology radically changed the way of life, including communication, business activities, leisure and various other aspects of everyday life. One of the consequences of such a transformation of society is its openness, as well as an ever faster and ever greater accessibility of information. We can conclude that social movements at the moment are greatly influenced by the data that acquire new meanings.

The transformation of modern society is also influenced by terrorism, which at the same time presents the main threat to world peace. The appearance of the new or mega-terrorism has not been possible until the information revolution directed the development of society towards openness and communication possibilities.[2]

Our starting point for the analysis of mega-terrorism is the hypothesis that the new terrorism paradigm is a consequence of the development of the information technology, which is especially evident in the fact that terrorist organizations have recognized the significance of the mass media for the attainment of their goals. Modern terrorism can thus be observed as a special form of communication.

The above-mentioned hypothesis is based on the following claims:

1　A consequence of the development of modern information technology is the creation of new forms of organizational structure and functioning of active terrorist organizations.

2　A terrorist act is a communication process based on the communication between terrorists and several target groups, which influences a wider population, not just direct victims.

3　There is an interactive (symbiotic) relationship between the media and terrorism, because the trends of the media industry and the laws of the media

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[2]　It can be expected that the activity of terrorist organizations, as well as the fight against terrorism, will in the future increasingly depend on information and information-communication technologies.

content production prefer the sensational content, which guarantees terrorist organizations maximum presence in the media due to their activities.

4   Terrorist organizations are constantly trying to manipulate and exploit the free media for their purposes.

Therefore, we believe that a scientific and expert contribution to the study of terrorism should be based on recognizing the characteristics of mega-terrorism. Special attention should be paid to the study of terrorism as one of the ways of communication, and to the correlation between the mass media and the new terrorism paradigm.

1 Characteristics of mega-terrorism

Today's terrorism has a global reach and influence that it did not have before globalization and the information revolution. When looking at terrorism in contemporary conditions, it is important to perceive and study its adjustment to those changes. Namely, terrorist organizations are constantly harmonizing their activities with modern processes, scientific and technological discoveries, in particular with the Internet and communication technologies. At the same time, terrorist organizations and groups are becoming more interlinked because of easier training, preparation and actions pursuit.

The changes of terrorism characteristics through history show that it is not a fixed phenomenon, but easily adaptable to the conditions and changes in society. This is especially noticeable in mega-terrorism, which functions in conditions of great openness of modern communities and extremely wide connectedness between them, which is a consequence of the information revolution. It prefers networked organizations to hierarchical structures. A networked organization changes the way terrorist organizations function and are structured, it influences changes in the choice of their targets' type, as well as the choice of weapon they use.

The attack on the USA on September 11th 2001 was a synchronized attack on a country, with several actions within one operation. In the future, there might be more synchronized operations in the wider area and in several countries, even continents. Intelligence estimates of Western countries warn about this new ability of the terrorist network, which now has wider possibilities of communication and a network of logistic support that is difficult to keep under surveillance. However, regardless of the new possibilities and capabilities of the terrorist network, new large attacks on Western countries do not occur as frequently as the terrorists are hoping for. One of the reasons for such a development is their concentration on those parts of the world estimated as vital for the humiliation of the enemy. In other words, the goal of modern terrorists is not to conquer the enemy – since that would, in regard to the enemy's power, be quite impossible – but to humiliate him and prevent him

from pursuing his interests around the world. Around ten years ago, Osama bin Laden was dreaming about a global victory over the USA and its allies that was supposed to lead to the key goal – the unity of the Islamic world, but the terrorist leaders of today do not think that way. Their priorities have changed for the most part due to the efficient activity of the allies in the fight against terrorism.

The consequence of such thinking was the concentration on those parts of the world in which the humiliation of the enemy would entail his strategic failure without losing in the battlefield. Present-day terrorists try to achieve in Afghanistan and Iraq what they had achieved in the 1980s against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. We can say that such an orientation is visible through their activities in the said countries. They regularly pursue attacks with numerous civilian victims, but of small influence on the overall situation. This is especially visible in Iraq, where the situation has been normalizing. These developments worry the headquarters, which is detectable in the words of one of Al-Qaeda's main leaders, Al-Zawahiri, who believes that one of the greatest sins of Islamic structures in Iraq is their acceptance of US help in the training and supervision of their forces. The strategy of turning the population against the elected authorities and their helpers is more successful in Afghanistan than in Iraq.

The paradigm of the new terrorism of the information age includes the changes that terrorist organizations have achieved at the organizational and technological levels, at the doctrinal and strategic levels, as well as the changes related to the diversity of their threats and to the way in which they manage conflicts.

Therefore, we can form a list of these new characteristics of mega-terrorism:

- transfer to the networked form of organization and networked warfare;
- communicational, rhetorical and symbolic dimensions of terrorism;
- symbiosis of the mass media and terrorism.

1.1 The Networking of Terrorism in the Information Age

Different researches of patterns and trends in the activities in the Middle East have confirmed the hypothesis that terrorism is evolving towards networked warfare, taking into account the fact that:

1 an ever larger number of terrorist organizations adopt network forms of organization, and in doing so use the information technology;

2 more recent terrorist organizations (those founded in the 1980s and 1990s) are more networked than the previous ones;

3 there is a positive correlation between the level of activity of a terrorist organization and the level of adoption of the networked form of organization (the more recent and less hierarchically organized terrorist organizations

such as Hamas, the *Islamic Jihad* Movement in *Palestine,* the Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda, which at the same time are the most active terrorist organizations, can serve as an example);[3]

4   there is an equal probability for the information technology to be used as an organizational aid and as an offensive weapon during a war;

5   there is a greater probability that recently recruited members of terrorist organizations are more competent in using the information technologies, which implies that terrorist organizations of the future will be more networked and will use computer technology more than they do today (Lesser et al., 1999: 67).

The global communication-information connectedness of the world gives modern terrorism a global reach and influence it did not have before globalization and the information revolution. The information revolution benefits the foundation and strengthening of networked forms of organizations, and terrorist organizations have skilfully adopted it by introducing the above-mentioned changes.[4]

Information age technologies especially benefit the network forms of organizations whose members/groups are geographically dispersed or are in charge of the implementation of different, but complementary activities. The increased speed of communication, the reduction of communication costs, as well as the integration of communication and computer technologies, are all reasons for the fact that the new information and communication technologies support and stimulate the formation of new networked forms of organization. In addition, the organizational structure of the business sector has started to apply to the structures of networked war participants.

The functioning of networked terrorist organizations greatly depends on the flow of information, and its interruption would significantly hinder the functioning and coordination of their activities. The Internet, as an information network, enables a two-way communication, while the level of using the information infrastructure for offensive purposes is proportional to the level of the terrorist organizations' exposure to the attacks of counter-terrorist forces. It is to be expected that terrorist organizations will often manage to achieve an advantage caused by the element of surprise, but this tactic can be adjusted and used in the counter-terrorist strategy as well.

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[3] The results of research into the advantages of networked forms of organizations of the mentioned terrorist organizations were presented by M. Zanini and S.J.A. Edwards in their paper "The networking of terror in the information age" (Zanini and Edwards, 2001).

[4] The character of the conflicts has also changed, for they increasingly depend on information and communication opportunities, and the decisive factor of conflict resolution is knowledge, i.e. the possession of quality information.

Counter-terrorist activities have to focus on identification of the networked form of a terrorist organization, both from the organizational and technological points of view, which includes additional training of the staff, as well as the latest technological equipment.

The counter-terrorist strategy should consider the following recommendations:

1 continuous monitoring of the way terrorist organizations use the information technology, accompanied by differentiation of the effects of their organizational and offensive capabilities;

2 counter-measures and adequate counter-terrorist activities need to be directed towards the "flow" of information (disturbance, the interruption of flow, disinformation, etc.);

3 it is necessary to improve the protection of the information infrastructure, because its efficient protection results in a more successful deterring of attacks.

The destructive power of the new terrorism, if it directs its activities towards the information war, will be more powerful than all existing classical methods, while the damages to mankind might surpass even those caused by biological or chemical weapons (Laqueur, 1996).

1.2 Terrorism as a Communication Process

Terrorism should be regarded as a socially construed communication process with a rhetorical meaning.[5] Terrorism, as a violent and destructive act, could be understood with the help of a symbolic value considered to be part of the terrorist act itself, and it differs from other forms of violence primarily because it influences a wider population, not just the direct victims. What makes such violence terroristic are exactly these additional means to communicate messages and their meaning to a wider audience. Harmon defines terrorism as "... an intentional and systematic killing, maiming and endangering of the innocent in order to instil fear for political causes" (Harmon, 2002: 19). Therefore, every terrorist act should be observed beyond the victims of the terrorist attack, because it is part of a larger process of communication through messages and stimulation of a desired response. Terrorist attacks in modern communication can be regarded as a "language of violence".[6] It is this "language of violence" that gives terrorism its real power through the creation of an effective propaganda effect on the modern society. It results in the change of behaviour and attitudes of the public that was or could be the potential target of

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[5] On terrorism as communication, see Tuman, 2003.

[6] For more detail, see Schmid and de Graaf, 1982.

an attack, because terrorists actually act violently towards some people in order to send a message to the others or to all, while immediate victims in such cases can be observed as a means or an instrument of communication. This has led us to start thinking about terrorism as a communication process (Tuman, 2003: 17), regardless of how morbid or violent it is. The understanding of this process will help us understand the real essence of terrorism and the way it constitutes our reality.

Terrorism can be observed through the communication strategy which consists of a sender – a terrorist, i.e. the designer of a message, and a recipient, i.e. a victim – an enemy or the entire public (Schmid and de Graaf, 1982). An old Chinese saying advises: "kill one to keep ten thousand in fear". In line with it, the terrorists use a very simple communication strategy, which can have several consequences: creation of fear in individuals and groups, polarization of the public opinion, spreading of false information and messages in order to deceive the enemy, promotion of their own activities, goals, motives, etc.

There are symbols in the terror itself, the way it is conducted, as well as in the targets of terrorist attacks, which prove that "terrorism as violence can mean even more than violence itself" (Tuman, 2003: 47). At the same time, it is extremely important how the public is going to perceive and interpret the symbolic meaning of terror.[7]

It is exactly this rhetorical dimension that points to the need to define terrorism as the process of communication between terrorists and several targeted audiences. Since there is no unified and generally accepted definition of terrorism, we believe that in the process of creation of such a definition, attention must be given to this communicational aspect as well, because without a whole definition of terrorism, it will not be possible to create a quality and effective strategy to fight terrorism.

1.3 Symbiosis of the Mass Media and Terrorism

Taking into account all existing results in the fight against terrorism, it seems that two areas are especially important: the physical and the ideological. At the physical level, the allied forces are in conflict with the terrorists, for example in Iraq or Afghanistan. The more dominant allied forces disable the operative functionality of the terrorists and that part of the conflict is less and less dynamic, primarily because the latter have less and less space for action. At the ideological level, the situation is quite different, because the terrorists act through the media at the global level. Al-Qaeda's headquarters pursue these activities in order to promote the global jihad. The counter-terrorist strategy prefers the physical fight against terrorism, and

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[7] Each individual terrorist attack hides a specific symbolic meaning, but it should also be observed as a symbol (notification) of a potential future threat.

is less focused on the ideological level. It seems that this area will be the key spot of conflict in the future.

How do the terrorists lead their ideological battle? The answer is quite simple: through the media. Terrorists try to attack more efficiently and not necessarily with a great number of victims any more. Regardless of the number of victims, every attack will gain large publicity at first. Of course, it decreases with time, but terrorists can always use it in order to strengthen their public influence through the media, thus increasing its value with their sympathizers, at the same time increasing the fear among their victims. In a way, the modern media directly help them, because every event connected with the terrorist network – which has already been presented by a country's security sector as its greatest enemy – represents a top story. For example, every statement of Al-Qaeda's members through video messages always attracts the attention of the world media, regardless of the fact that not all of them cause a violent act.

In order to politically survive, promote its goals and influence a much wider audience than the one it attacks, modern terrorism entirely depends on the technological achievements of modern civilization, the mass communication means and global information systems. Ray Surette emphasizes that terrorists have become aware of the power of the messages they have been sending through the media. Different terrorist groups have recognized the power of the media in forming public opinion and the social agenda through comprehensive reporting and comments – which in particular include terrorist violence. Surette recognizes and accentuates the fact that "terrorism has become a form of mass entertainment and a public theatre, and as such has become extremely valuable for media organizations" (Surette, 1998). "Terrorism is a theatre", stated Brian Jenkins many years ago (Jenkins, 1981). Similarly, Martha Crenshaw described modern terrorism with these words: "the most fundamental goal of terrorism is to be awarded and receive attention" (Crenshaw, 1981: 396).

Special attention should definitely be paid to the role of the mass media, which have also developed through the information revolution. The terrorists try to demonstrate the persuasiveness of their threats by destruction and violence, and the media reporting on that are very often considered to be at least partially responsible for "creating" terrorism. Of course, the modern mass media cannot "create" terrorism, but can play a big role in creating its phenomenon. When there is terrorist violence, the relationship between terrorists and the media inevitably becomes "symbiotic", and the modern media technology, communication satellites and the swift expansion of television have a significant effect on increasing the potential of terrorist publicity.

Most experts rightfully label modern terrorism as a mass media-oriented terrorism. Namely, upon analysis of terrorist actions, it is noticeable that in most cases

they have been pursued with the very goal of attracting the international media attention. Terrorist actions have been oriented towards the audience, not the actual victims, which is why there are so many hostages held – to further dramatize the event.

An analysis of terrorist tactics indicates that terrorist organizations are becoming more and more aware of the importance of information and information-communication technologies for the functioning of democratic institutions. In addition, terrorist organizations, aware of the importance of the media, use their great power to increase their own ability to create an atmosphere of fear in the world, to strengthen their propaganda, to publicize their ideas or to force governments, companies and wealthy individuals to make concessions or pay ransoms. Therefore, the mass communication media are crucial to the achievement of the terrorists' basic goals. On the other hand, the appearance of terrorists in the media undoubtedly means that their activities are news-worthy and can be used as a means to attract both the media and public attention for some of their political ideas. It is noticeable that terrorists and terrorist organizations, along with violent methods, have also developed modern systems of mass media management and have started to use most of the techniques used by public relations experts. Diverse sophisticated communication techniques can be detected in terrorist activities. Today, terrorists use anonymous calls to television shows, anonymous telephone tips and threats via e-mail, they communicate with agencies, televisions and newspapers, they use videotapes on television and on the Internet, but also start up their own newspapers and TV production houses. Taking into account the different forms used, it is obvious that terrorists have an organized approach to the media and that their communication with the media is organized by experts of different profiles.[8]

Taking into account the fact that violent extremists have their own media experts, trained to manipulate the opinions of the elites, it is obvious that their activities are directed towards planning and pursuing attacks with the help of all forms of communication. They are well aware of the fact that communication removes limits and that a single journalist's story can cause equal damage as their military attack. At the same time, they can act swiftly with a small number of people and using meagre means, in opposition to the huge, expensive and bureaucratized democratic institutions.

It is clear that terrorists want to appear in prime-time broadcasts not just in order to gain mass publicity, but also to get legitimacy that such media attention

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[8] This confirms the thesis that they have recognized the significance and role of the mass media in the modern society, and that they include the models and techniques of communication in their activity strategies, aimed at achieving the largest possible influence on the effects that mass communication has on the society as a whole.

creates in the eyes of their followers and sympathizers. On the other hand, the media also "need" terrorist activities because they provide them with current and sensationalistic information that increase their ratings. In search of the "oxygen of publicity",[9] an interactive relationship between terrorists and the media is being created. For the mass media organizations, the coverage of terrorism, especially the long-lasting incidents like airplane hijacking and situations with hostages, present a large source of sensation and visually appealing news that can truly increase their ratings.

However, despite the fact that they obviously rely on one another, it would be false to conclude that the media and terrorists maintain a "friendly relationship". Terrorists often treat media organizations and journalists as enemies that need to be punished and destroyed, and media workers have quite often been the targets of terrorist violence. It can be concluded that terrorists primarily want to manipulate and exploit the media for their own purposes, primarily in order to have their activities portrayed in the prime-time news and thus gain mass publicity.

The irresponsible behaviour of the media can be neutralized by ensuring that the connection of experts with the media and the news publishing plan become a necessary part of reaction of security and intelligence services to any terrorist campaign, as well as of the process of planning and crisis management. In a democratic society, a good and effective policy of public reporting that would limit the great power of the mass media as much as possible is an element of vital importance in the successful strategy of the fight against terrorism.

The key blow to the terrorist strategy could be the decision of the media and political leadership to mobilize the democratic public opinion and strengthen the resistance of the society, as well as to provoke fiercer and more efficient countermeasures that would thwart the terrorists' efforts, since their goal is to crush their enemies' willpower through intimidation.

There is a number of other important ways in which responsible media in a democratic society can thwart terrorist goals (Wilkinson, 2002: 195):

- by objectively portraying the cruelty of terrorist violence and killing of the innocent, the media can greatly contribute to the dissolution of the myth about fighters for justice and freedom, as terrorists usually present themselves;
- responsible and accurate reporting on incidents can increase the public's awareness (e.g. in regard to unusual packages, suspicious persons or behaviour);

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[9] This term was first used by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

- the media can broadcast police-issued warnings to the public together with directives for behaviour in dangerous situations;
- the media of an international scope can provide valuable data regarding international movements, connections between different persons, terrorists and different terrorist organizations, new types of weapons and potential future threats, such as the planning of an international terrorist spectacle or the signs pointing to a new threat;
- the media also represent a necessary forum for quality discussions on social and political implications of terrorism and for the development of adequate procedures and counter-measures;
- the media will remind the authorities that the response to terrorism must be in line with the rule of law, respect for fundamental rights and demands of social justice.

The media do not have to become a terrorist instrument. Through a premeditated approach, the media in Western liberal countries can become weapons used as an important means in defeating terrorists, while their positive contributions surely exceed the unfavourable consequences of a potentially irresponsible behaviour of some journalists and media institutions.

We can conclude that terrorism gains its global reach from the media, that the media affect the way in which the public perceives terrorism and its dangers, and that they influence political decisions used to respond to terrorism, as well as the relationships formed by national and international policies.

2 New Counter-terrorist Strategies

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in human history. It has been emerging as a special form of violence very often, and it has assumed its modern form in the last hundred years. Terrorism is most usually used by certain social groups organized in order to achieve certain goals. By using violence, terrorists have always been sending messages to the public in which they wanted to pursue their goals. There has never been a lack of organized response by states in the territory of which such violence occurred or against which it was used. Such response most commonly boiled down to force and violence, which additionally stimulated terrorists to undertake new actions (Martin, 2002).

Many countries use military and police forces as their main instruments in the fight against terrorism and clearly state their attitude about vigorous response to any violence that the terrorists undertake or intend to undertake. Governments strive to send a clear message to terrorists that each violent act will be punished by an act of the same kind. The threat of force and its use should deter terrorists from their intentions. There is a question of how much force should be used and against whom

it should be directed in order to stop the terrorists. Is there a "gravity centre", a high command, a key person, a spot in the world that might be subjected to adequate force aimed at destroying terrorists and their organizations?[10]

The key question is: why are the strategies based on force still being used, when it has been demonstrated that they do not guarantee success in the fight against modern terrorism? These strategies demand centralization and central allocation of all resources, pushing the political power in a democratic society towards the security sector. The reasons for retaining this strategy should be sought in multiple effects for the ruling elites. The use of force against dangers such as terrorism gives these elites extraordinary benefits in regard of controlling the society. All state agencies with the ability for coercion play a significant role in the use of state resources: political and economical. If we were to try and determine the specific effects of the use of force in the fight against terrorism, we would encounter serious problems in the elaboration of the fact that terrorist acts still happen in the modern world even after this mass application of force. However, if we were to analyse the specific effects the use of force has on the internal political and economical situation in the states that are using it, we would certainly notice a number of restrictions used to supervise different segments of modern society. Such findings would lead us to conclude that terrorists are still free to pursue their activities, while the citizens of the countries implementing these strategies based on force and violence are less and less free to enjoy the benefits of a democratic and open society.[11]

The use of counter-terrorist strategies using exclusively force has several direct expenditures for the country implementing it:

1 **Increased budget expenditures**. The state must equip and prepare its agencies able to use force for new tasks, which demands increased budget expenditures.

2 **Political expenditures**. The use of strategies of violence can have direct consequences on the national political scene. They are noticeable in the strengthening of the state institutions of force (the army, the police and the secret services) and in their influence on political decision-making in the area of security policy.

[10] Knowing the modern organization of the terrorist network, we could state that there are no conditions in which a "decisive strike" against terrorists might be undertaken, the final result of which would be the eradication of terrorism.

[11] The citizens are double victims: first, of the violence the terrorists have undertaken, and second, of the force applied by their own government aimed at uncovering possible terrorist activities. State activities in uncovering terrorist intents are comprehensive and are applied throughout the state territory and over all citizens. This approach touches upon a great majority of citizens that are in no way connected to terrorists, supervises their activities, and indirectly limits their freedom and civil rights.

3 **Endangering civil freedoms and human rights in the name of national security**.[12]

4 **Using security issues to retain or come into power**. In both cases, promises are made of quick actions that imply the use of force.

Experience has shown that terrorists change their tactics and modes of operation very quickly. If a target seems to be risky, they are fast in finding new ones. The usual reaction to terrorist attacks is an increased protection of objects similar to the attacked one. Terrorists rarely continue to direct their actions towards the same or similar objects, because they know their protection is strengthened. That is why they very quickly redirect to the new targets, less protected or not yet protected. Violent responses to terrorism have so far not managed to cease its activities. In some states, such strategy is subject to public criticism, usually visible in demands to withdraw military forces from the operations in Afghanistan and especially Iraq. Despite all attempts to portray itself as the only correct strategy, the fight against terrorism based exclusively on violence does not produce good results. It has in many ways transformed the modern society and strengthened violence as a consequence of the use of force in international relations.

Sometimes it seems that the choice of force in response to terrorist violence is good and logical. This is especially valid in the time right after a terrorist attack. However, contemporary analyses indicate that terrorism has transformed and that the use of force in the fight against new terrorism brings ever smaller results. On the one hand, there are terrorists who change their forms and modes of organizations and activities, and on the other, there are quite static state structures without enough initiative or ideas for new ways of fighting terrorism. Is there a way for modern states to avoid the trap they have fallen in, rather than remain trapped by maintaining the *status quo* approach?

In our attempts to find an answer to this question, we have to emphasize that states cannot renounce the politics of force in the fight against terrorism. The demonstration of force and its use against enemies (regardless of how visible they are) is appropriate to the state and it always receives significant support from the public. Politicians will more commonly reach for the use of force with an immediate effect, than systematically and patiently build long-term policies that are not based on the use of violence. In democratic societies there is a cyclical test of trust in the government – namely, the elections – and each government is always more prone to use the instruments more likely to offer quicker results (or at least create an impression that these results will be quick and grand). Questions about how useful the use of force in the fight against terrorism really is are very rarely asked for at least three reasons:

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[12] For more detail, see Leone and Anrig, 2007.

1 **It is difficult to define success in the fight against terrorism through the use of force**. Is it a success to throw out tons of bombs? Is it a success to knock down targeted objects with direct long-distance hits? Is it a success to apply new measures of control to different activities of one's own citizens? If success is difficult to define, how can we measure the effects of our strategy? These questions are very rarely asked, and governments demonstrate their successfulness through a clearly expressed will to fight terrorism with all available means.

2 **A decision to use force very often gains public support**. In that case, potential expenditures are not discussed, because national security is the most important issue.

3 **The implementation of the mentioned strategy, in principle, does not include the use of alternative approaches to fighting terrorism**. There are no conditions in which it would be possible to draw a comparison between different strategies or, at least, between the different ways that could be used.

Everyone can see that modern terrorists are not mad fanatics, but persons with rational reactions to impediments stemming from the strategies applied by their enemies. Terrorist organizations have significant innovative capacities, which are expressed through new approaches to pursuing terrorist actions. It is definitely clear today that terrorists are more enterprising than the inert state machinery, which pins its hopes on the instruments of force: the army, the police and the secret services.

If we agree that the current approach does not sufficiently guarantee the successful fight against terrorism, which not only presupposes the physical elimination of terrorists or their training sites, but also includes new measures aimed at strengthening the social capacities to face terrorism, then we should consider alternative approaches.

Through their activities, the terrorists try to gain the greatest benefits for pursuing their goals. There are two types of benefits: total and marginal. The total benefits regard the great effects of terrorist actions, such as the one of September 11. Such actions are rarely repeated. However, they are usually followed by a number of smaller actions with marginal benefits for the terrorists. The attacked country adjusts its instruments based on experiences from previous actions, thus reducing their effects. Each new action represents new costs to the terrorists. Even marginal actions demand high costs. These costs increase if an entire society participates in the strengthening of its capacities in the fight against terrorism.

The inclusion of society can be observed at two levels: first, the decentralization of activities within the crisis management system; second, the creation of alternatives to the politics based on force. Since force is applied in a centralized manner,

an alternative approach should also have to be decentralized. By doing so, numerous activities within the society that strengthen the preparedness for extraordinary situations are ensured.

Conclusion

Counter-terrorist strategies must be aimed at the reduction of the benefits the terrorists might gain by pursuing terrorist activities. Therefore, it is not enough to just punish terrorists through the use of force; counter-terrorist activities should include a number of new procedures in order to strengthen the resistance of the society and reduce the benefits for the terrorists. A new counter-terrorist strategy cannot be implemented unless the entire society is included in its implementation. In this way, the marginal benefits terrorists are trying to extract by undertaking numerous terrorist actions of a limited range can be reduced.

In order to make the fight against terrorism successful, counter-terrorist activities at the organizational, strategic and technological levels will have to adjust to the new terrorism or mega-terrorism. It is therefore necessary to determine the way in which the modern society can respond to such terrorism and the ways in which the effects of the information revolution can be of help in the process. In doing so, special attention should be paid to the role of the media as the main channels for the transfer and dissemination of information, which, in the modern society, are quickly becoming one of the main levers of both terrorist and counter-terrorist organizations.

The issue of the terrorists' manipulation of the media should be perceived as a serious social problem, while the "symbiotic relationship" between terrorism and the mass media should worry the counter-terrorist strategists. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of creating a strategy of the fight against terrorism through the media, which should answer the question of the media's contribution to the fight against terrorism. Therefore, even though the mass media in a democratic society are subject to terrorist manipulation, they can also contribute immensely to the fight against terrorism.

In regard to the issue defined and described above, the counter-terrorist strategy for fighting mega-terrorism should contain the following basic elements:
- The ways in which force is implemented, as well as alternative approaches;
- Elements of decentralization of counter-terrorist activities;
- The ways of including the society in activities used to create resistance and reduce its vulnerability;
- An analysis of the way in which the information technology development influences the transformation of the modern mass media;

- ▪ An analysis of the role the mass media play in the modern society;
- ▪ A portrayal of the transformation and adjustment of terrorist activities to the new social conditions;
- ▪ A portrayal of the ways of transformation of the new terrorism paradigm;
- ▪ An analysis of the ways in which the terrorists use the mass media to disseminate their own activities and propaganda;
- ▪ Recognition of terrorism as a form of communication;
- ▪ An analysis of the way the mass media have been used in the fight against terrorism so far;
- ▪ An assessment of the possible use of the mass media in the fight against terrorism;
- ▪ An assessment of the ways in which states can control communication channels without endangering the openness of the society and fundamental human rights.

We believe that this approach to modern terrorism – through the recognition of terrorism as a form of communication and the recognition of the importance of the symbiosis which modern terrorism has created with the mass media – will contribute to the improvement of existing counter-terrorist strategies and direct them towards the decentralization of activities and greater inclusion of the society in their implementation.

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