

THE TERRORISM – A THREAT FOR MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract

The main feature of the international terrorist activity in the last two years is the unprecedented growth of the phenomenon. Total number of incidents was almost 5000 in 2005 (i.e. 4924 incidents), almost 85% more than the peak of 2004 (2646) and 2002 (2649), representing an absolute record in the history of terrorism. The Pope sees terrorism as "a cruel and perverse decision that defies the sacred right to life and undermines the very foundations of civil society ... If together we can succeed in eliminating from our hearts any trace of rancor, resisting to any form of intolerance and opposing ourselves to any manifestations of violence, we reject the wave of ferocious fanaticism that endangers the lives of so many others and thwarts the progress towards world peace" In light of these ideas, this paper aims to make a brief analysis of terrorism in the contemporary society.

Being a specific phenomenon of social-political life, nowadays terrorism represents a serious danger, threatening with the enlargement of the conflict areas, causing human loses and material and moral prejudices to the whole world.

[¹] Pope Benedict XVI, COLOGNE, 21 August 2005

The main method used by terrorists to impose their conditions to local authorities remains the terror, as in old times. This method is represented by a lot of violent acts using fire weapons, different types of explosive disposals, taking hostages or taking over means of public transportation and so on.

For the time being, the danger of terrorism is acknowledged, put in theory and well studied, taking into consideration different aspects, by various categories of political analysts, philosophers, sociologists, statisticians, legal consultants and military people.

These people must provide a unanimous accepted definition of terrorism to deter the terrorist organization in finding a way to justify their actions, using this definition. It is very important that this definition of terrorism not to include in this type of actions "guerillas war" (solitaire fighters or members of singular groups) and in the same time to stop them from self-proclaiming fighters for independence or freedom.

It is necessary to point out that many states may define some actions as terrorists ones while similar acts carried out by other entities are accepted as non-terrorists.

The term of terrorism is derived from latin word "terror" which means physical violence, fear, deliberated provoked terror using public violent acts or means capable of provoking a common danger.

The terrorism means to organize, finance and equip some people special trained for carrying out specific violent actions and threat with violence, using systematic and persistent violence.

We consider *terrorism* being a method of solving problems that uses violent means, between groups with different interests, criminal organizations or people, for implementing political, economic, religious, ethnic or other types of demands. Their goal is to frighten and convince people and public society to put pressure on local authorities and governments in order to satisfy terrorist organizations' demands. The terrorist acts are different from common crimes

because of their goals and consequences, namely provoking panic, disorder and terror inside of pointed collectivities, causing many victims and damages.

Taking into consideration terrorist phenomenon evolution till now, some specialists say that terrorism will extend its area of actions, develop, improve its methods of actions if oppressions against it, famine, economical, political and social unfairness are become bigger. Terrorists acts will be more sophisticated and carry out causing more violence then previous ones, becoming kind of perpetuum-mobile, if one replies with violence to violence. It is considered that anti-terrorist coalition forces ought to emphasize on prophylaxis, prevention and counteracting, but, in the same time, an international legislative system in this field should be implemented^[2].

As a general rule, the terrorists are people from social national minorities who behave as independent nation or state. Anyway, the terrorist organizations can not act inside a totally hostile environment. They need facilities, logistic and financial support, the possibility to recruit new members, safe operational bases etc. Usually these needs are satisfied by one certain part of the people who're sympathizing with the leadership of organization or by states which have the same political goals.

It is said that the current terrorism is a conflict of civilizations, sustained by controversial book „The Clash of Civilization” written by American writer Samuel P. Huntington. He said: „As long as Islam stays Islam (which it will happen) and Occident stays Occident (which is less sure to be), this fundamental conflict between two great civilization and way of life will keep on defining their relationship. This has happened because Islamists would be sure of their culture superiority and obsessed by their power inferiority”.

[²] Cf. Gl.bg.(r) prof. univ. dr. Costică Țenu, Col. (r) prof. univ. cons. dr. Lucian Stăncilă – *Arta militară în actualitate*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 249;

The most dangerous menace^[3] to civilized world, lower than nuclear threat, is the terrorist one. In the last decades, extremists actions and reactions have proliferated because of civilization extension on the whole planet and because everybody has access to information, technology and culture. They are symmetric with the extremism from globalization and they intend to stop and destabilize the civilized world offensive against fragmentation, promiscuity, poverty and violence.

In these days, the terrorism has developed, improved and adapted to the new circumstances of present times. We can speak about types of terrorism, identifying suicidal and criminal activities of terrorists groups from all over the world, which achieve their goals in the name of a cause or because an unsatisfied wishes.

The experts have identified at least nine types of terrorism: nationalistic terrorism, fundamentalist Islamic terrorism (the most dangerous), terrorism supported by one state, gauche terrorism, cyber-terrorism, narcotic-terrorism, bio-terrorism, ad-terrorism and air- terrorism ^[4].

Military people perceive the terrorism as one type of low-intensity conflict, being at the other side of armed conflict spectrum. In this respect, the military people focus on sponsor states and on terrorist groups in a strategic perspective, and on guys and terrorist acts in a tactical perspective. The idea of looking at terrorism as a new way of carrying war appeared after the military conflicts from Vietnam and Afghanistan etc.

For modern society, the main terrorist threats are as follows :^[5]

- possibility of using nuclear, chemical, radiological and biological means, substances or weapons, or weapons of mass destruction (WMD);

^[3] Cf. Dr. Constantin Moștofleu, Dr. Gheorghe Văduva - *Tendențe în lupta armată*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 16;

^[4] Cf. Col (r) prof. Gabriel Dulea - *Psihologia terorii și teroarea psihologică în situații de criză*, Ed. U.N.Ap. București 2006,

^[5] Cf. Gl. dr. Mircea Mureșan, Gl. bg. (r) dr. Gheorghe Văduva – *Războiul viitorului, viitorul războiului*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 455-457;

- preparing and carrying out attacks on nuclear facilities from different countries or against chemical factories, biological laboratories etc., to get nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or to detonate these types of weapons or substances at that place, in closed or open spaces, in crowded areas or other places (inside trains, buses, automobiles, plains, ships, depots, near nuclear facilities and so on) , to cause spectacular catastrophes, in the name of some ideas, ideologies, principles considered to be holy or assuming a role to punish or to dismay;

- proliferation of punitive or revenge actions on the guys or states which start the campaign against terrorism and on states belonging to anti-terrorism coalition;

- continuation of individual, small, organized or large terrorist acts against western democracies, specially USA and their allies;

- continuing carrying out assassinations and actions against those who oppose to this chaos generated by system incompatibilities favorable to organized mass crime, people and drug traffic, illicit winnings;

- possible carrying out attacks on environment protection systems, dams and using toxic and radioactive offal to produce ecological catastrophes;

- continuation and diversification of political assassinations, to deepen disagreements between large entities, power centers and proliferations of friction situations;

- attack of schools, research institutes, laboratories, economical facilities with national or international importance, infrastructure issues, to produce panic and terror, and to obtain a part of means necessary to carry out terrorist attacks;

- violent attack of value systems and culture institutions;

- creation of diversions or disorders to provoke uncertainty, tensions, instabilities or even violent counter-attacks to deepen anomie situation of social systems and gaps between people or systems ;

- continuation and enhancement of attacks using bombs, plastic explosives and home made explosive devices on people in transportation means, crowded places, on civilian and military infrastructure facilities or compounds (highways, bridges, aerodromes, ports or port facilities, railway stations, depots, embassies, international organization headquarters) and, if is possible, with mass media agents being present;

- deepen social anomie and proliferation criminal and psychopathic terrorism;

- maintenance or growing ethnic terrorist attacks to destroy the idea of living together; propagation ferocious selfhood and aggressiveness used to ethnic purification for ethnic, ideological and religious separatism;

- terrorist acts in cyber-space and its infrastructures to create serious perturbations in communication systems, destroying command and control systems, banking systems, to introduce viruses inside date bases, creation of a general chaos state in information systems.

Taking into consideration the disastrous consequences of terrorism to society, numerous states have adopted political, diplomatic, economic and military measures to prevent it.

Among the military ones there are, on one hand, discouraging, through military means, the terrorist phenomena, achieving a dialog a good international cooperation, throughout political factors, between national and international military institutions, NATO's involvement, in close cooperation with others countries' military structures, secret services and other structures, in the searching and annihilation process, with military means, of the terrorist phenomena risk generating factors. On the other hand, by immediately striking terrorist vital cores, centers, logistical or operational basses or any other terrorist supporting structures; conceiving, developing and consolidating informational system or other structure which will closely watch terrorist phenomena and create conditions to easily strike and annihilate; creating modular special forces

structures able to combat, on field, through direct action, terrorist groups or even individual acting terrorists; creating and developing flexible medium and long term anti-terrorist strategies, capable to prevent both human and material protection as preemptive strike of terrorist structure and bases.

The modern war against terrorism will be carried out by NATO, coalitions or other forces (under UN command) in a space where strategic initiative has been achieved (Iraq or Afghanistan). “Americans show the Occident can operate in the same space as terrorist, the war zone, conserving their advance over the maneuver”.^[6] Still, Donald Rumsfeld wrote on the February 9th 2004 *Le monde* that if a new 11 September will occur in US and the Allies won't have enough resources to launch a campaign. Beside from punctual striking the enemy, a psychological campaign is needed in order to convince muslims population that such a fight against terrorism and islamic fundamentalism is justified. Hence, a newly extremely interesting tendency arise, that changes even more military action's physiognomy, meaning that the actual fight will always be preceded and accompanied by a powerful psychological and media action.

Accordingly to specialists' opinion, after 1989, along with the turbulence created after the crash of communist regimes, a movement of international terrorism pole to Eastern Europe took place, thus Romania had become one of the main destinations for paramilitary organizations. The most terrorist organizations comes from Middle East, some of them more notorious than other, according with number of victims and attacks made.

Although they committed no crimes, the arab terrorist conducted activities in Romania. Beside those coming in peace, many of so called “business-man” and “students” remained in Romania, whose activities raise a lot of questions. Recent actions that revealed more or less active terrorist organizations on Romanian territory came to prove this theory.

^[6] Cf. Jeran-Cristoph Bechon, *France-Amerique: un an apres*, în „Defense Nationale“, nr. 5/2005, p. 146;

The secret services and Police actions in order to capture some members of terrorist organizations or to make some plans of those impossible, to upgrade frontiers control actions, doesn't represent a real guarantee that the terrorist organizations not succeeded to keep infiltrate in Romanian area, a real dangerous fact. In this new international situation, the secret services believe that Romania is and will still be assaulted by terrorist organizations who want to expend their European operations area.

It is hard to understand that those organizations activated some times on Rumanian area, the terrorist attacks are a real proof. So, in 1973, the specialists of Antiterrorists Special Unit (USLA) discovered an important explosive stock of "Black September" organization. Those explosives should have been detonated on Israel Embassy in Bucharest.

At 4th of December 1984, an Palestinian student citizen of Jordanian State, Ahmad Mohammed Aii Al- Hers, shut to death the Jordanian diploma Azmi Al-Mufti, in Bucharest. The investigations conclude that Al-Hers was Abu Nidal Organization member and he received that gun and ammunition from Mustafa Said Hasan Al-Khardali, another member of the same organization in Romania.

At 26th of May 1985, an VBIED exploded at Bucharest University, in Grozavesti neighborhood, two USLA officers died trying to destroy that IED. This attack was made by Rumanian part of "Muslims Brothers", four members being involved: Hassan Adil Al-Ali, Tarek Awad – Iraq citizens, Haytham Rahrneh, alis "The Doc", syrian citizen and Ibrahim Aii Ahmad Dawood, Jordanian citizen. Those four planed to assassinate some syrian citizens they considered like enemies of "Muslims Brothers".

At 20th of August 1991, the Indian ambassador at Bucharest, Julio Francis Ribeiro, was shut by some members of Babbar Khalsa Organization of Khalistan Eliberation Front - an organization who fight to create an independent Sikh state in Punjab area. Five terrorists who comes from Swiss, managed and effectuated an commando training in Romania and choose as target the Indian

ambassador cause he was the last Punjab Police Chief . An Rumanian officer from USLA, who guard the Indian ambassador, killed one of terrorists, Jugraj Singh and was hardly wounded by a second one, Jagwinder Singh. The Balwinder and Singh Group escaped, but the fifth member was kept and convicted to eight year of prison.

At the end of 1996 was found the presence in Romania of Ali Safwan, Hezbolah member, who was part of commando group who hijacked in 1995 a fly of TWA Company from Athena to Rome.

In 1998, before the Romanian National Day, an IED was discovered under the Izvor Bridge in Bucharest. The attack wasn't claimed by any terrorist organization.

In 2000, in Craiova took place the first terrorist bomb attack in the history of Romanian Railways Company. In the toilette of one of the carriages was discovered a bomb which had been deactivated 15 minutes before the explosion time.

In 2006 the authorities discovered two gas tanks with a handmade trigger mechanism in the car of a Romanian citizen chased by the intelligence services. The had been planned to be detonated in Timisoara^[7].

All these examples indicate that Romania could be the target of some direct or indirect attacks set up by different terrorist organizations.

The vulnerabilities of Romanian state are not few at all and besides the inconsistent economy and the prolonged economical transition increase the uncertainty and the un-safety. Some of these vulnerabilities are amplified by the position of the Romanian state, as NATO member and strategic partner of the United States of America and distributed over the political, diplomatic, economic and military environment.

[⁷] Cf. Gl.bg.(r) prof. univ. dr. Costică Țenu, Col. (r) prof. univ. cons. dr. Lucian Stăncilă – *Arta militară în actualitate*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 250-252;

The most significant vulnerabilities are those regarding Romanian military units which execute missions outside the Romanian borders. Due to the hostility of the locals groups and population the terrorist acts are very frequent and difficult to be prevented.

There are also other vulnerabilities, generated by different reforms, by military personnel reductions, economic crisis, interest groups and corruption.

The army, which is the most exposed institution to conventional threats, is less vulnerable regarding terrorist attacks. Still, among the vulnerabilities which target military institution, as well, are as follows: ^[8]

- high surface on which the military buildings are placed; their position in remoted areas or in crowded ones, or in any other area that do not allow a proper protection; thus these structures can be easily attacked and even pinned down by terrorist groups;

- military personnel: active, civilians, or enlisted military live in regular, unprotected districts which makes them vulnerable to attacks;

- military infrastructures as well as the personnel serving on airfields, harbors, shooting range, on training grounds are not securitized enough;

- supplying/logistic systems, the relation military-civilian, PR systems are difficult to secure, thus becoming more penetrable.

Romania, a new NATO member, has already a serious contribution in stating the organization strategy's new dimension, by participating with troops in the conflict areas, as well as through political, economical, financial, informational support of the offensive against terrorism.

One must notice the co-operation between our country and NATO, US and EU and other international organisms (ONU, OSCE). Romania continues to act against terrorism, as well as an active player in the anti-terrorist coalition and as NATO member. Romania's activity as a SEEGROUP member, SEEGROUP

[⁸] Cf. Gl. dr. Mircea Mureșan, Gl. bg. (r) dr. Gheorghe Văduva – *Războiul viitorului, viitorul războiului*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 477-478;

being an organization which operates inside NATO Initiative for South-East Europe is conducted according with the new strategic vision. As a chairman of this institution, in 2002, Romania initiated a compendium containing all the measures taken by the states in this area against terrorism. In the same period Romania implemented a national strategy to prevent and fight against terrorism, connecting its specific structures to the international antiterrorist campaign.

The future Romanian contribution to fighting against terrorism is going to be more consistent as a NATO member. The new status allows Romania to actively participate in decision making and consolidate its capacity of providing stability and security both inside and outside of the North-Atlantic space. The missions against terrorism could contain [⁹]:

- participate in exposure and annihilation of terrorist networks, organizations and groups in Caucaz and Black Sea area and also in Central Europe;
- participate, within the NATO, OSCE and/or ONU missions, in stabilizing the situation and preventing the appearance of new terrorist groups in conflict areas, especially Tha Balkans and Transnistria;
- fighting against terrorism directly or cooperating with NATO, SEEBRIG and BLACKSEAFOR members;
- participate in fighting against terrorism in the sites which domestic troops are already fighting in;
- increase the efforts for prevention and fighting against the internal terrorism.

Our country actively participate in elaborating and applying the strategy against terrorism as a member of the coalition against terrorism. As the actions of different terrorist groups are diverse and unpredictable other missions are also

[⁹] Cf. Gl. dr. Mircea Mureșan, Gl. bg. (r) dr. Gheorghe Văduva – *Războiul viitorului, viitorul războiului*, Ed. U.N.Ap., București 2004, pg. 480-482;

possible, especially for discovering and exposing legal or illegal networks and organizations that might initiate terrorist acts.

The terrorism is the longest and most complex threat against peace, stability, democratic institutions, society and individuals. It accompanied the human society from the beginning, as an output of its existence and evolution. Yet there were always ways to work around and mitigate its effects. Even if it couldn't be stopped ever since, the terrorism has not been considered war until the very end of 20st century.

Starting with 2001, after 9/11, the meaning of terrorism inherently contained the idea of "war" as the terrorist attacks turned into global threats that need large scale countermeasures.

The war against terrorism became, in the beginning of 21st century a reality. It is a different kind of war, kept not only using military actions but also using other complex measures.

That is why our civilization must find the resources, the means and the procedures in order to eradicate this phenomenon from our lives or at least to keep it under control. Such an objective cannot be ever achieved if there is no permanent and total international cooperation.

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