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THE ESSENCE AND NOTION OF TERRORISM IN THE ASPECT OF ASYMMETRICAL THREAT

Abstract

Authors in their article suggest, it that was can divide on two main kinds of activity with terrorism fight: the fight with terrorists as well as the terroristic organizations as well as the liquidating of stepping out causes of terrorism. The joint with international co-operation of states working and the organization in range fighting the terrorism, it can in future contribute to considerable set - back of expansion this dangerous phenomenon even if after this, to the terrorism did not stand the most dangerous "plague XXI in."

Key words: characteristics terrorism, war of terrorism, asymmetrical threat.

Introduction

Recently terrorism has become one of the most serious threats to public order in the world. An analysis of the consequences of its impact, one can assume, that to a certain extent it is similar to the traditional form of a classical war, however, there is one difference, it uses unconventional forms of action. An essential determinant, which distinguishes it from classical forms, is the fact that it uses mainly surprise attack or attack from hiding, i.e. it takes a form of an asymmetrical attack. Quite frequently this form of attack has irregular nature, e.g. partisan attacks, which usually lead to destabilisation of state authority, death of innocent people, substantial spending and involvement of large groups of people. Contrary to conventional wars, it attempts to keep large numbers of people in suspense by intimidating and terrorising them, abduction or using unconventional combat assets. The terrorist message is directed mainly to the attacked subjects, to show them their weakness and lack of control or to signalise that if they continue state policy or – in more general terms – maintain its political direction, they should take into account

substantial damage and losses, i.e. bear enormous political costs. This is why the authors of this article have decided to make an attempt to define its typology in the aspect of academic and scientific analysis.

1. TERRORISM – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NOTION

An analysis of available secondary sources devoted to the notion of *terrorism* shows that it is not possible to find a few definitions which can unambiguously define it, because, according to numerous authors, it is a multicriteria and multidimensional notion. It is worth emphasising that taking into consideration only the most important secondary sources, one can find more than one hundred definitions. It should be noted that most of them refer directly to the word *terror*, which in Latin means fear, dread, fright, intimidation and repression, stressing at the same time the pejorative meaning of this notion. Thus one should analyse definitions of this phenomenon available in literature.

The definition provided in the PWN[1] encyclopaedia states that *terrorism* is "an activity motivated by various ideologies, planned and organised by single people or groups, resulting in a breach of law. They are undertaken to force state authorities to make concessions. Such actions are performed ruthlessly using various means (physical violence, weapons and explosives) in conditions of purposefully achieved notoriety and fear instilled in the society". Kopaliński (1999) presents a different version of this definition, he defines this notion as "organising coups (armed and bomb attacks) against government members, people connected with authorities, political opponents, representatives of other religions and races, foreigners or accidental passers-by, abductions and plane hijackings committed to gain power, create atmosphere of terror, confusion, chaos, to express protest and obtain benefits for some groups or categories"[2]. Therefore, terrorism can be any action which involves using force or a threat of using it to compel performance of actions or abstain from them for political reasons. Thus terrorism is a phenomenon which does not have a single ideological identity, because its typical characteristic is a tendency to use violence to achieve various ideological, geopolitical, military or social and economic goals, so it can be used by supporters of any views[3].

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[1] *New Encyclopaedia PWN* [in Polish]*,* vol. 6, Warszawa 1997, p. 370.
[2] W. Kopaliński, *The Dictionary of Events, Notions and Legends of the 20th c.* [in Polish], Wyd. Naukowe PWN*,* Warszawa 1999, p. 423.
[3] K. Liedel, *Information Management in Fighting Terrorism* [in Polish] Wyd. Trio, Warszawa 2010, p. 55.

One more different definition is given by Wojciechowski (2009), who understands *terrorism* as the "use of force or a threat of using it for political reasons. It is used by groups or individuals regardless of whether it is used against opposition or the established authority in the state"[4]. However, the most popular definition is the so called academic definition, according to which terrorism is "a method of repeated attacks which causes anxiety, it is adopted by usually clandestine individuals, groups or state entities, it is used for criminal or political reasons and, contrary to assaults against life – direct goals of used violence are not its main goals[5]. Direct victims of human violence are selected accidentally, "blindly" (goals depend on circumstances) or selectively (representative goals) from the target population and are used as message carriers. Threats are used to manipulate the main goal (a community or communities), changing it into the goal of terror, demands or attention focus depending whether in a given situation perpetrators seek for threats, enslavement or propaganda[6]. Another interpretation is presented by the European Commission, which after the attacks of 11 September 2001 proposed a uniform definition of this phenomenon, according to which terrorist attacks are: "all intentional acts committed by individuals or organisations against one or more than one state, their institutions or people for the purpose of intimidation or serious destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country"[7]. An equally frequently cited definition has been proposed by the United States Department of State, it defines terrorism as „premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience"[8]. However, according to primary sources related to special tasks performed by special military units, terrorism is "illegal use of force a threat to use it against individuals or binding law (…), it is undertaken to intimidate authorities or to compel particular acts, achieve political, religious or ideological goals"[9]. In this case the notion of *terrorism* is used in a very wide meaning of actions as the author condensed in it the largest possible number of

[4] S. Wojciechowskich, *A Review of Internal Security* [in Polish] Wyd. ABW, No. 1/2009, p. 57.
[5] *http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terroryzm* (12.05.2012).
[6] M. Flemming, *Political Terrorism in International Legislation* [in Polish], Wojskowy Przegląd Prawniczy No. 1, 1996; T.R. Aleksandrowicz, *International Terrorism* [in Polish], Oficyna Wydawnicza ŁOŚGRAF - Wiesław Łoś, Warszawa 2008.
[7] A. Ciupiński, M. Zając, *Selected Issues in Fighting International Terrorism* [in Polish], Wyd. AON, Warszawa 2003, p. 35.
[8] B. Hoffman, *Faces of Terrorism* [in Polish], Wyd. Klub Świata Książki, Warszawa 2001, p. 27.
[9] S. Kulczyński, R. Kwećka, *Special Actions in Armed Struggle of Land Forces* [in Polish], Wyd. AON, Warszawa 1997, p. 101.

variables. The definition encompasses both objects of terrorist attacks and the most frequently used terrorist methods and goals to be achieved by these methods. According to the authors this definition shows the substance of the problem which is defining the contemporary notion of *terrorism*.

Although quite a few definitions of the notion of *terrorism* developed by various authors, who interpret this phenomenon in a multicriteria and multidimensional way, have been quoted here, it is possible to find common determinants in these definitions. Namely on the basis of analyses conducted by Schmid and Jongman it can be stated that the most frequently mentioned common factors defining terrorism are: violence and force, political grounds of actions, need to make others experience intimidation, fear and terror. Because violence and force are indispensable and basic factors in criminal activity, terrorism should be categorised taking into account another premise, i.e. a political aspect of the consequences of terrorist acts. It is in accordance with the frequency of occurrence of this variable in definitions (about 65%). This criterion allows to avoid an erroneous interpretation of every attack (criminal act), which is performed in an identical way[10] as terrorist acts[11].

One more important issue should be mentioned here, namely that definitions of the notion of *terrorism* to a large extent refer to the notion of *terror*. Unfortunately they are identified with this determinant meaning fear and awe so feelings which are a consequence of violence, use of force or cruelty, so it results from a certain way of action, while *terrorism* is a kind of philosophy based on violence but used to obtain asset goal. By violence acts terrorists first of all want to attract attention to themselves or a certain issue they fight for and they also want to show their power to the public as they want to be taken into account and do not want to be ignored[12].

2. TERRORISM TYPOLOGY

The question of terrorism typology is equally complex as its definition. A commonly accepted division of terrorism distinguished four basic criteria, namely[13]:

- ❖ *Ideology* (e.g. leftist, rightist, ecological, etc.);
- ❖ *Goals* to be achieved by terrorists (e.g. political independence, etc.);
- ❖ *Place* of violent acts (e.g. Middle East or Europe, etc.);

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[10] This the interpretation very often used by terrorists.
[11] K. Jałoszyński, *The Concept of Contemporary Antiterrorist Actions* [in Polish], Zeszyty Naukowe AON – supplement, Warszawa 2003, p. 59.
[12] A. Bernard, *Terrorism Strategy* [in Polish], Wyd. MON, Warszawa 1978, p. 32.
[13] B. Borkowski (ed.), *Contemporary World Conflicts* [in Polish], Uczelniane Wydawnictwa Naukowo – Dydaktyczne, Kraków 2001, p. 118.

❖ *Historical roots* (e.g. the Irish Republican Army).

Subjective criteria can help to distinguish the following types of terrorism, *non-state terrorism, terrorism sponsored by a state* and *state terrorism*. In this group the most the most common seems to be the non-state terrorism encompassing terrorist organisations acting independently of state structures while possibly making a part of larger international structures or only using their support and maintaining their own autonomy[14]. By contrast terrorism sponsored by the state occurs in situation when the state provides a terrorist organisation with any support. It may happen that the state supports a terrorist organisation, however, it does not control it directly (e.g. help offered by the Soviet Union for terrorist movements around the world in the 20th c. – the rule of a "common enemy") or controls a given organisation requesting it to perform particular acts (e.g. support for Rote Armee Fraktion – RAF, by the Eastern Germany political police Stasi)[15]. State terrorism means a situation when the state uses camouflaged violence (in contrast to the politic of terror), using for the purpose its secret service agents (direct state terrorism) or specially hired groups or individuals, who are not public servants (indirect state terrorism). Terrorism may be used by the state as a political instrument in its interior politics, i.e. violence used against opposition, ethnical minorities, etc., as well as in foreign politics against citizens, institutions and infrastructure of another state[16]. However, taking into consideration the objective criterion, one distinguishes *individual, total* and *economic terrorism*. The first of them refers to violence against individuals, it usually has a symbolic meaning. Total terrorism is directed to accidental units or groups and usually is not strictly related to the terrorist goal. By contrast, economic terrorism is an act of sabotage whose goal is economic destruction[17].

Another terrorism division criterion is its territorial reach. In this case one can divide terrorism into *domestic, international and internal* which is internationally sponsored. The nationality of terrorists and their victims is taken into account as well as the territory on which attacks were performed. Domestic terrorism is directed against citizens of one state by their fellow citizens and is usually related to the territory of their state or possibly property located in the territory of another state (e.g. embassy buildings). In the case of international terrorism, citizens or

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[14] Ibidem, p. 78.
[15] Ibidem, p. 78.
[16] Ibidem, p. 78.
[17] Ibidem, p. 78.

territories of more than one state are involved in it. An attack may take place in the territory of a state which is not the country of origin of terrorists or their goal may be people from another country. Some examples encompass attacking foreign tourists or diplomatic representations of foreign countries, attacking citizens of terrorists' countries of origin who are abroad. Interior terrorism is internationally sponsored, e.g. when a terrorist organisation is externally sponsored while acting autonomously. However, this division, due to globalisation processes and disappearing internal and external borders, enjoys smaller and smaller popularity.

Another classification of terrorism with regard to motivation and political goals, it defines terrorism as *struggle for social reforms, moral order and liberation of ethnic groups*. In the first case the goal of the activity of terrorist organisations is mainly starting a social revolution. Terrorist organisations strive for the achievement of this goal by inciting people making them aware of their real interest (according to terrorists), weakening state structures and power apparatus[18]. However, the goal of terrorism treated as struggle for a moral order is a change of society in accordance with assumptions made by terrorists. All other goals are devoted to "moral revival" or "restoration" of the society. This goal motivates, e.g. the Al – Kaida terrorist organisation[19]. Terrorism understood as struggle to liberate ethnic groups (or national and religious groups) is phenomenon whose goal is the establishment of terrorists' own state or a wide autonomy within an existing state. The last significant criterion, which is worth discussing, is the criterion of motivation and political goals, whose solid basis is division according to the source of conflict in the expected terrorist attack. The best description of this division is presented by Bolechów (2003), who listed[20]:

- Nationalistic, ethnic, racial terrorism (e.g. ETA);
- Religious terrorism in the form of a lasting religious conflict or terrorism of religious sects with political goals;
- Nationalistic and religious terrorism (e.g. the Palestinian Hamas) and terrorism of the so called pure ideology in the form of left-wing terrorism or extreme right-wing terrorism;
- Para-political terrorism in the form of eco-terrorism, antiabortion terrorism, animal rights terrorism.

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[18] Ibidem, s. 79.
[19] Ibidem, s. 79.
[20] B. Bolechów, *Terrorism in the Bipolar World* [in Polish], Wyd. Adam Marszałek , Toruń 2003, p. 233.

Conclusion

To summarise the above considerations on the typology of the notion of terrorism, it is impossible not to notice that fighting terrorism can be divided into two main types of activity, namely: first of all it is an interim activity, i.e. fighting terrorism and terrorist organisations, as a rule, is not very efficient because one cannot overcome all terrorists, new volunteers may join an organisation at any time[21], second of all, it is temporary activity, its goal is eradication of existing causes of terrorism. The main reason is usually social dissatisfaction connected with a belief that terrorism is the best, and usually also the only way to improve an existing social, political or military situation. Eradication of reasons may have the form of improvement of the economic situation of people in areas where terrorism rapidly escalates and satisfying other social needs (freedom of religion and opinion, acceptable political system, etc.), which are connected with education building a mature society which can change its situation using means other than terror or a society which does not allow others to manipulate it in a way leading to violence.

Therefore, contemporary terrorism attacks all possible goals, such as: government members, representatives of diplomatic institutions, religious and educational facilities, industrial facilities, transport and communication means, including ports and traffic junctions, police stations and military facilities, government structures, media and business centres. Treatment of terrorist acts as international crime or criminal acts, regardless of their political, social, religious and ideological background as well as considering terrorists as criminals posing danger to the humankind, connected with international cooperation of states and international and regional organisations in fighting terrorism in the future can contribute to significant limitation of the expansion of this dangerous phenomenon at least to stop terrosim from becoming the most dangerous "plague of the 21st century"

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