

# Terrorism in a changing world

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*In the very beginning of the 21st century, the world is facing a new threat - global terrorism. This kind of terrorism is different from the terrorism the world used to know. It has different actors, different aims and more terrifying lethality. The attack on the World Trade Center, September 11, 2001, is the event that unquestionably proves that. After that terrifying incident it was clear that terrorists could attack in any way and anywhere, but the states would not know where to strike back. On the one side there is a little group of people armed only with knives and on the other are countries with powerful armies, air forces and nuclear weapons, but unable to respond adequately.*

*It can be said that a new war is in the offing, the war that aims to end globalization, hegemony and Western World supremacy. As Jean Baudrillard expressed in his article "The Spirit of Terrorism": "The first two World Wars were classic wars. The first ended European supremacy and the colonial era. The second ended Nazism. The third, which did happen, as a dissuasive Cold War, ended communism...But the fourth World War is elsewhere. It is that which haunts every global order, every hegemonic domination; -if Islam dominated the world, terrorism would fight against it".<sup>1</sup>*

**Key words:** terrorism, terrorists

## 1. Introduction

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. The oldest terrorists were holy warriors who were killing civilians like, for example, Jewish Zealots in the first century Palestine, who publicly slit the throats of Romans and their collaborators. Tracks of terrorist acts have been found also in India where followers of the Thuggee cult would ritually strangle passers-by as sacrifices to the Hindu goddess Kali in the seventh century. The word terrorism was first used in 1793-94, after the French Revolution. That Reign of Terror killed thousands of people using guillotine against enemies of Jacobins regime. During "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Russia, which began after the October Revolution, terrorism was used to secure rule of new political elite. Bolsheviks were

using terrorism for the same purpose like Jacobins in France. A successful early case of terrorism was assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand by a Serb extremist, which ignited the fire of World War I. In the World War II terrorism was instrument used to fight against German occupation. Freedom fighters of the French Resistance were bombing railroads, destroying bridges and killing Germans officials, quislings and soldiers to weaken enemy forces. In the eyes of German occupiers they were terrorists, but in the eyes of peoples who fought against Germany, they were freedom fighters. Similar tactics was used in Palestine, where Israeli freedom fighters used terrorist activities against British troops. The worst terrorist act occurred when Jewish terrorist organization named Irgun bombed hotel King David, where headquarters of the British Government was placed, and killed 91 people. Despite the large number of casualties, that incident accomplished its aim and Irgun alarmed the world public and pointed to its fight for independence from British Government.

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Helped with strong lobbying in the UN and the US Irgun reached all goals which, at the end, led to the foundation of State of Israel in 1948. In Algeria, National Liberation Front of Algeria fought against French rule with a ruthless terror campaign as planting bombs at cinemas and cafes. The French struck back ferociously. The intervention was successful, but it resulted in political defeat. The epilogue was that Charles de Gaulle launched negotiations, which led to Algerian Independence in 1962.

Following their example, IRA<sup>2</sup> (Irish Republican Army), present day IRA splinter groups, and ETA (Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna) are continuously using terrorist methods to reach their goals. For IRA it is the unification of the Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, and for ETA it is the establishment of an independent homeland in Spain's Basque region and southwest French provinces of Labourd, Basse-Navarra, and Soule, based on Marxist principles. Some terrorist organizations that marked terrorist history do not exist any more, like Bader Meinkof<sup>3</sup> from Germany, Revolutionary Organization 17 November from Greece or Red Brigades from Italy.

From this short historical overview it can be seen that terrorism has a long history and in spite of all efforts to stop it, terrorism not only survived but also developed into the biggest threat of modern society.

## 2. Terrorism and its definitions

There is no single definition of terrorism, which is caused by its diversity, different political aims, acts that include kidnapping, killing, extortion, cooperation with criminal organizations and states that sponsor terrorism and single fanatics. Recited expression that "one man's terrorist is another freedom fighter" also presents a problem, which means that finding of a unique definition will be a difficult task.

In spite of all, some definitions are close enough to define it precisely. The State Department defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." The FBI defines terrorism as, "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." Walter Laqueur<sup>4</sup> in his article "Post-modern Terrorism"<sup>5</sup> says that current definitions of

terrorism fail to capture the magnitude of the problem worldwide, but also brings his, more extensive, definition that states: "Terrorism has been defined as the substate application of violence or threatened violence intended to sow panic in a society, to weaken or even overthrow the incumbents, and to bring about political change. It shades on occasion into guerrilla warfare (although unlike guerrillas, terrorists are unable or unwilling to take or hold territory) and even a substitute for war between states." Terrorism can be starting point of guerrilla warfare, but also final stage of unsuccessful guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla follows military strategy and is close to regular act of war, opposite to terrorism where operations are conducted secretly. In another useful attempt to produce a definition of terrorism, Paul Pillar<sup>6</sup> argues that there are four key elements of terrorism: It is premeditated, planned in advance, rather than an impulsive act of rage; It is political, not criminal, like the violence that groups such as the mafia use to get money, but designed to change the existing political order; It is aimed at civilians, not at military targets or combat-ready troops; It is carried out by subnational groups, not by the army of a country.

Although the first three Pillar's elements can be taken seriously, the last one must be taken with reserve because the army of a particular country can resort to terrorist methods to reach its goals (the USA intervention in Panama or Israel interventions against Palestinians in the occupied areas).

Terrorism can be divided into domestic and international. Domestic terrorism involves groups or individuals who are based and operate entirely within a particular country without foreign direction, and their acts are directed against the state they are part of.

International terrorism includes acts of violence committed by groups or individuals, who are connected with a foreign power or whose activities transcend national frontiers in order to carry out attacks on chosen targets and attacks at home on foreign embassies or international lines of commerce as in airline hijacking.

Terrorism should also be distinguished from international criminal activity. As Laqueur states there is one fundamental difference between international crime and terrorism: mafias have no interest in overthrowing the government and decisively weakening society; in fact, they have a vested interest in a prosperous economy.<sup>7</sup> But, some examples of connections between terrorists and crime organizations can be found, such as cooperation between FARC<sup>8</sup> and drug smugglers in Columbia.

### 3. Types of terrorism

There are many different types of terrorism ranging from nationalist-separatist to state terrorism. Every type has its own characteristics that separate it from the others. These types will be explained in this chapter.

**National-separatist terrorists** seek to form a separate state for their own national group. They are mostly members of old cultural communities who differ from the other members of a particular state by their origin, language, tradition and sometimes religion. These terrorists attract most sympathies from international surroundings. In this case the mentioned expression "one man's terrorist is another freedom fighter" cause real problem because it is difficult to define who really is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter. Some examples of national-separatist terrorist groups are IRA Splinter Groups, ETA, and Kurdistan Worker's Party.

**Religious terrorists** use violent acts under cover of a holy war to further what they see as divinely commanded purposes. They often come from major faiths, fundamentalist religions and small cults who abandoned rational thinking and try to pursue their own vision of divine will. They also believe their religion is the only true religion and to protect it with life is a noble cause. Al-Quaeda can be put into this category as well as HAMAS, radical Jewish group Koch, Aum Shinrikyo cult responsible for the attack with sarin nerve gas on several Tokyo subway trains in 1995, etc.

**Left-wing terrorists** have one single goal: to destroy capitalism and replace it with a communist or socialist regime. They use limited violent instruments to avoid mass casualties they say they want to save. Their main focus are kidnapping of tycoons or big industrials and bombing monuments.

**Right-wing terrorists** use violence to replace parliamentary democracy with authoritarian-fascist regime. They are racist and anti-Semitic oriented, so their attacks are directed against immigrants in the first place. Groups of extreme right particularly appear before or simultaneously with left-wing terrorist organizations (Italy) but their appearance can also be a reaction to the presence of foreigners in a particular country caused by mass immigration (Skinheads in Germany).

**State-sponsored terrorists** are deliberately used by radical states as foreign policy tools. According to Bruce Hoffman<sup>9</sup> this is a cost-effective

way of waging war covertly, through the use of surrogate warriors or "guns for hire". State-sponsored terrorist groups are more capable of carrying out bigger and deadlier attacks because they have bigger resources at their disposal. The US State Department claims that state-sponsored terrorist groups are: Hezbollah (backed up by Iran), Abu Nidal Organization (backed up by Syria and Libya) and Japanese Red Army (often cooperates with Libya). According to the same source, states that sponsor terrorism are: Iran, as leader state, than Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria. Iraq was on that list before the "Shock and Awe" operation when the US and British forces defeated Saddam Hussein's regime, but now they should be excluded from that group.

**Anarchist terrorists** were active at the end of 1870's until about 1920's and their goal was to overthrow established government in particular country. They conducted a wave of bombings and assassination. Some experts see signs of a new interest in anarchist violence emerging from the recent wave of protests against globalization and the new world order.

**State terrorism** is difficult to define because that kind of terrorism is result of approved state procedure, but it can be said that state terrorism is a violent act where state attacks a defined goal to satisfy its interests. The instrument used in such a case is a carefully calculated politics aimed at mobilization of the world public on the side of the state that conducts terrorist methods. State terrorism can be divided into internal, where a particular state represses and kills its citizens (Jacobins regime, SSSR in Stalin's era, Khmer Rouge in Cambodia), and external, where a particular country or countries conduct violent methods against other countries to reach their goals (the USA in Nicaragua, Panama and Salvador).

### 4. New Terrorism

In this paper the term "New Terrorism" includes terrorism as a global phenomenon, which should be unquestionable after 2001 attack on WTC. This new form of terrorism is no more limited to some specific area. Terrorists do not announce their identity, and they are connected in decentralized cells, which means that by destroying one of it the network would still be operational. These decentralized cells are small and do not depend on any of their members, which means if one of them is caught or killed, the cell will not be destroyed. Terrorists work-

ing alone or in very small groups will be more difficult to detect unless they make a major mistake or are discovered by accident.<sup>10</sup> Laqueur, W., "Postmodern Terrorism: New Rules for an Old Game", *USIA Electronic Journal*, Vol. 2, The arrestment of some of its members in Europe, USA and Asia proves that terrorist cells are placed throughout the world.

Even though they are spread in the wide range, modern technology allows them to communicate and share information very quickly and untraceably. Last ten years produced technological boom and Internet, *laptops*, cellular and satellite phones become available to everyone, including terrorists. Using IT they can coordinate their operations without limits from every part of the world, including forest, desert and mountain areas, which are mostly used places for shelters and training camps. These new technologies allow them to be more efficient in the supply of weapons of any kind and to strike in any part of the world.

The most terrifying threat today are weapons of mass destruction, which terrorists can purchase on black market or steal from nuclear power states facilities and use it against anyone who is not on "their side". It is not easy to find that kind of weapons but even small possibility that exists must be enough to worry. IAEA<sup>11</sup> warned that Pakistan could provide nuclear material for terrorists who are determined to make atomic bomb and experts from former SSSR could sell them their knowledge. Also, IAEA sent demand to countries with nuclear weapons to pay more attention to the security of its nuclear facilities. This demand has been sent to the address of five nuclear powers: USA, Russia, China, France and Great Britain, but also to Pakistan, India and Israel, the countries considered to have that kind of weapons. Although nuclear weapons is the main concern, weapons of mass destruction also include biological agents, man made chemical compounds and chemical and radiological weapons. Until 1970s most observers believed that stolen nuclear material constituted the greatest threat in the escalation of terrorist weapons, but many now think the danger could lie elsewhere. An April 1996 Defense Department report says that "most terrorist groups do not have the financial and technical resources to acquire nuclear weapons but could gather materials to make radiological dispersion devices and some biological and chemical agents."<sup>12</sup> Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult released sarin nerve gas into the Tokyo subway in 1995, resulting in 12 killed and approximately 3,500 wounded, which proves that previous claim has a strong background. But, these kinds of weapons are not easy to get because of various reasons. Nuclear material is not simple to manufacture, de-

liver, steel or buy and its limited supply is monitored by IAEA and only governments can legally procure it. Chemical agents storage is not simple at all and their dispersal depends on external factors. Biological agents storage and its dispersal are very fallaciously and the risk of contamination is very high. All these reasons show that terrorist groups have many difficulties to procure weapons of mass destruction, but their possibilities must not be neglected. US Secretary Cohen said: "I believe the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction presents the greatest threat that the world has ever known. We are finding more and more countries that are acquiring technology—not only missile technology—and are developing chemical and biological weapons capabilities to be used in theater and also on a long-range basis. So I think that is perhaps the greatest threat that any of us will face in the coming years."<sup>13</sup> Global terrorism can be elevated on the higher level where terrorists will not use only civil airplanes to destroy their targets, like in the WTC incident, but also weapons of mass destruction where casualties could be numberless. Recent attacks in Oklahoma City, at the World Trade Towers, and at American embassies in Africa demonstrate the horrifying consequences of a terrorist strike. But as technological advances make weapons of mass destruction frighteningly easy to acquire, a revolution is occurring in the very nature of terrorism—one that may make these attacks look like child's play.<sup>14</sup>

The new age of modern terrorism has also brought new dimension of violence - suicidal terrorism. This kind of warfare is not new to terrorists because it has been used before (in Palestine this kind of resistance against Israeli occupation has practiced since 1980's), but never with instruments like weapons of mass destruction. That lethal combination worries because suicidal terrorism, as it is, does not have alternative response. As Jean Baudrillard expressed terrorists succeeded in making their own death the absolute arm against a system that feeds off the exclusion of death, whose ideal is that of zero death. And all the means of dissuasion and destruction are powerless against an enemy who has already made his death a counter-offensive.<sup>15</sup> These terrorists have very precise goals and they will not die without a strong reason. To die, but to kill as many as they can, that is their final goal. In their philosophy violence and death are seen as an end to itself, as divinely inspired way of serving a higher, "holy" cause. Baudrillard continues that one must recognize the birth of a new terrorism, a new form of action that enters the game and determine its rules. These people do not fight with equal arms, as they produce their own deaths, to which there is no pos-

sible response ("they are cowards"). Money and financial speculation, information technologies and aeronautics, the production of spectacle and media networks: they have assimilated all of modernity and globalization, while maintaining their aim to destroy it.<sup>16</sup> Now when terrorism became global phenomenon all these facts must be taken seriously. Al-Qaeda succeeded to reach the USA and to hurt it very badly. Fortunately, they had "only" civil planes. What if they had planes loaded with biological weapons or even a nuclear bomb? Or if they succeeded to hit the chosen target in Europe or Asia from some hidden place with launched nuclear missile? Consequences would be enormous. Before 11 September 2001 no one could imagine that some terrorist group is capable of doing such coordinate operation. Now it can be seen that this kind of threat is serious and must not be neglected in any way.

Countering the new terrorism must be one of the main goals of every state of modern democracy. Not only that terrorism kills people and destroys infrastructure of the attacked country but it also kills democracy and all bases of modern society. Its suppression is common interest of the entire international community. After tragic events of September 11, 2001, eight most powerful countries, known as G-8, adopted counter-terrorist strategy that has four elements: The G-8 is striving hard to define itself as a counter-terrorism coalition by seeking to commit all its members to a common set of preventative measures; The G-8 strategy also seeks to utilize the United Nations as a focus for international action and for legitimacy in the war against terrorism; The G-8 sees

an important role for itself in exporting counter-terrorist "best practices" throughout the international community; The G-8 is clearly alive to the new reality of international terrorism.<sup>17</sup> The newest strategies are needed because today the terrorism has become more progressive than the terrorism known before. History has shown that terrorism is changing continuously and every time it strikes it is more terrifying and more deadly. Paul Wilkinson stated that it is wise to plan for a continuing trend towards massive car and truck bombings in crowded city areas, and "spectacular" terrorists attacks, for example, on civil aviation, airport facilities, and military or diplomatic facilities, designed to capture maximum shock and to effect some terrorist demands.<sup>18</sup> "Old" terrorists had no interests in mass casualties; they wanted to have all attention they could get. Even expert Brian Jenkins said in 1997 that "terrorists want a lot of people watching and lot of people listening and not a lot of people dead."<sup>19</sup> Now, as it can be seen from WTC incident, terrorists want as many casualties as possible. They have no pity, they will show no remorse and it can be expected that they will continue with even deathlier attacks. According to Bruce Hoffman "the struggle against terrorism is never ending. Similarly, our research for solutions and new approaches must be continuous and unyielding, proportional to the threat posed by our adversaries in both innovation and determination." With adoption of new, modern techniques in combination with those already known, terrorism can be reduced to minimum level.

## NOTES

1 Baudrillard, J., "The Spirit of Terrorism", <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/List/Archives/nettime/1/0111/msg00083.html>

2 According to the State Department IRA is no longer terrorist organisation. Present Irish terrorist organizations are Real Ira, Continuity IRA and Irish National Liberation Army.

3 Also known as Red Army Faction.

4 Walter Laqueur is chairman of the International Research Council at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

5 Laqueur, W., "Postmodern Terrorism: New Rules For An Old Game", FOREIGN AFFAIRS - September/October 1996, [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/laqueur.htm](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/laqueur.htm)

6 Paul Pillar is a former deputy chief of the CIA's Counterterrorist Center.

7 Laqueur, W., "Postmodern Terrorism: New Rules For An Old Game", FOREIGN AFFAIRS - September/October 1996, [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/laqueur.htm](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/laqueur.htm)

8 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - the largest, best trained and best-equipped insurgent organization in Colombia. Established in 1964 as a rural-based, pro/Soviet guerilla army. State Department considers it as terrorist organization.

9 Bruce Hoffman is director of RAND Washington office and head of its terrorism research group. RAND is a nonprofit institution that helps to improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.

10 Laqueur, W., "Postmodern Terrorism: New Rules for an Old Game", USIA Electronic Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1997, [www.usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0297/ijge/gj-3.htm](http://www.usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0297/ijge/gj-3.htm)

11 International Atomic Energy Agency, placed in Vienna, carries out activities related to peaceful development and verification of nuclear energy's users.

12 Laqueur, W., "Postmodern Terrorism: New Rules for an Old Game", USIA Electronic Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1997, <http://www.usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0297/ijge/gj-3.htm>

13 From Secretary Cohen's confirmation hearing - January 1997.

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16 Ibid.

17 Wark, W., "Fighting Terrorism: the Role of the G-8", CBS News Online, [www.cbc.ca/printablestory.jsp](http://www.cbc.ca/printablestory.jsp), June 2002.

18 Wilkinson, P., "Terrorism: Motivations and Causes", [www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com53\\_e.html](http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/comment/com53_e.html)

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