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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICIES IN EUROPEAN UNION

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**Abstract**

The paper is constructed in the way as introduction depicts brief information about the notion of international terrorism and its challenges in XXI century, further it focuses on the history of the European terrorism: the way it has emerged, why Europe is so attractive for terrorists. Next phase is to look up closely to each case, what kind of terroristic attacks took place in each of the state, how has it influenced the policy adoption and implementation, how each case differs from one another. Finally study draws a conclusion based on the data presented, identifying general trends, successful strategies and aspects that are need to be developed.

## 4. Introduction

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon, it has kept the world in fear for a long time and still newspaper headings are full of terrorist attacks and suicide bombings that bring up dozens of killed and thousands of injured. It traces back its origins to the times of French Revolution when the conducts of revolutionaries were labeled as such. (Berg, 2004; Stephens, 2004, p. 457). However it has become a great concern of the United Nations since 1960s following the series of aircraft hijackings. (Berg, 2004; Stephens, 2004, p. 457). The usual target of modern terrorists is Western World, and consequently Europe is no excuse. Even though massively known 9/11 has taken place in the United States and the term "War on Terror" has been manifested there too, Europe has faced many challenges due to the terrorist activities on the own territory. European Union has created and adopted many strategies on fighting terrorism and moreover many European states have significant experience and notable success fighting it both varieties old and new terrorism. The term "New Terrorism" signifies a new type of international terrorism that aspires to cause massive devastations, large scale destructions and many casualties. (Hippel, 2005, p.3).

A new phase of terrorism has emerged around the times of 9/11, when technological advancement made easier to communicate and share information which is in turn was used by terrorists in their own ways. Despite the significance and consequences of the terrorism it still does not have widely accepted definition, which creates problems on the way of its solution. This paper analyzes counter-terrorism policies and their effectiveness on the

example of the European Union. Study tries to identify main strategies used to fight against terrorism, their enforcement in different EU countries and outcomes they have brought. The history of tackling with the problem of terrorism is to be investigated on the example of such EU states as France, Germany, Spain Great Britain and European Union as a single entity. Each of the state mentioned has a major experience in overcoming consequences and implementing strategies of counter-terrorism, therefore looking closely to each case is important while drawing the whole picture of European Union case.

## 5. The Notion of International Terrorism

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in human experience. Violence has always been an effective measure to fight existing regimes, to overthrown ruling elites, monarchs and to oppose states. However this sort of terrorism is differentiated from the "terrorism" that is now in our common sense. Violence against states or governments usually was targeting armies or governors. Terrorism today on its hand is characterized by the use of violence against civilians with expressed desire of causing terror or panic among the population.

In its popular understanding the term 'terrorism' tends to refer to an act that is wrong, evil, illegitimate, illegal, and a crime. The term has come to be used to describe a wide range of violent conduct. Acts characterized as terrorist in nature can occur both in conflict and peace-time. They may constitute crimes in domestic and international levels, and they are motivated by a complex set of reasons and ideals.

Terroristic acts are usually pursued by long-term motivations of terrorist organizations. It may take a long time developing and reinforcing such acts, sometimes they start from not-so-violent acts and escalate into sophisticated operations such as that undertaken on 11 September 2001 in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania or intensification of acts by Al-Qaida from the bombing of US Embassy in Nairobi in 1998, to the attack on the USS Cole in the Yemen in 2000.

The most important feature of terrorism that distinguishes it from other criminal acts or conducts during armed conflicts is the motivation that drives terrorists. If usual criminal acts are done with the aim of personal gain whether it is materialistic benefit or psychological need as revenge and etc., terrorists

pursue altruistic goals. They work upon a higher cause or ideology that is greater than his or her personal impulses or gains. It should be noted that individual terrorist may act out of their personal experience or belief. It can be generally said, however, that a terrorist (or at least the entity that recruited the individual) will act for the furtherance of an external cause (whether it be a localized secessionist movement or global jihad) and for the benefit this has to both the cause and the people of it. (Ilan, 2005).

Added to these distinct motivations are the standards against which terrorists measure their conduct. The fact that a terrorist act might be unlawful according to the law of the State in which the act is done, or under international law, is argued to be irrelevant to a terrorist. Terrorists measure their conduct against the belief or the ideology they are pursuing. If the ideology mandates the killing, then killing is not murder but, instead, a legitimate and appropriate act.

Moving from these more abstract ideologies, one can also categories the reasons for particular terrorist acts as falling within one or more of the following four motivations: secession; insurgency; regional retribution; and the phenomenon of what has come to be known as 'the global jihad'. (Ganor, 2000).

It is an all-too-common assertion that one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. For instance, would a bombing carried out by a rebel group, which is directed towards the destabilization of dictatorial authorities perpetrating horrific crimes against the local population (the Pol Pot Regime, for example), amount to a terrorist act or an act of a legitimate liberation movement? (Ganor, 2000). Such propositions have been the subject of much debate.

The term 'terrorism' originates from Latin word 'terrere' that means 'to frighten'. It obtained its modern form 'terrorism' during the Reign of Terror in France from 1793–1794. In Maximilien Robespierre's words:

*'...terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs'*. (A Brief History of Terrorism, 2003).

The Roman Empire used violence ranging from crucifixion of individuals to full-scale genocide to force individuals and nations into submission. The French Revolution sent more than 20,000 people to the guillotine over a period of a few months. Modern examples of drastic state terrorism include Nazi Germany, Stalinist Soviet Union, communist China of the Mao period, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and several other dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. (Mockaitis, 2007, pp. 19–21).

Various non-state perpetrators have also used violence to coerce their enemies through fear, throughout history. Jewish Zealots assassinated enemies in their struggle against the Roman Empire, Assassins killed crusaders in the Holy Land, in 1605 Guy Fawkes nearly destroyed the British Parliament, and anarchists have assassinated various high-ranking officials and heads of states. In an act of terrorism with probably the most disastrous consequences in human history, Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip shot dead Archduke Franz Ferdinand triggering the chain of events that led to the First World War, and the tremendous suffering of millions of people. The events of 11 September 2001 showed that organizations motivated by religion are equally as willing to use violence in pursuit of their goals. (Mockaitis, 2003, p. 7).

These presented examples provide only a glimpse of the very wide spectrum of actors and goals that have been associated with the use of violence in a way that has been named 'terrorism'. Clearly, one could readily argue that anarchists in Russia sought not only to coerce the czarist regime of Russia through fear, but also tried to launch a larger uprising. Such argument is absolutely correct and only underlines the difficulty of defining terrorism in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, it is not that surprising that the United Nations Organization (UN) still does not have an official definition of terrorism. It is very difficult to find a common denominator to all such events and make a generalization that does not become meaningless. The main obstacles to forging consensus on the definition of terrorism have concerned acts of terror committed by states, and the distinction between the activities of terrorists and those of freedom fighters. (Mockaitis 2007, p. 2).

The 'academic consensus definition' of terrorism is a case in point:

*Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for*

*idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.* (Definitions of Terrorism, 2007).

The United States (US) government has experienced similar problems in defining terrorism. The US Department of Defense has defined terrorism as:

*'The calculated use of unlawful violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.'*

The problem with the Department of Defense definition is that it covers all sorts of terrorist activities, it does not discern it clearly enough from other forms of violence. Simultaneously, nine other US government departments have come forward with nine other definitions. (Mockaitis 2007, p. 2.)

The European Union sees as terrorism acts those that aim at:

• seriously intimidating a population;

• unduly compelling a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act;

• seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization. (Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on Combating Terrorism).

These objectives can be achieved through various illegal activities. They range from attacks on a person's life to cutting vital services to society, and respective threats; they include hijackings, kidnappings and other forms of criminal activity. According to the EU definition, terrorism is not a particular

ideology or movement, but rather a method or tactic for achieving various goals. (EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007, p. 9).

**6. The European Union**

In 2006 altogether 498 terrorist attacks were carried out in the EU with the vast majority of them causing limited material damage and deliberately avoiding casualties. There was only one (failed) Islamic terrorist attack in the EU (in Germany) that was aimed at causing mass casualties, and one uncovered terror plot in the UK having the same objective. At the same time, 257 (36.4%) of the 706 apprehended terrorist suspects were arrested on suspicion of being connected to Islamist terror activities. France, Spain and the UK are the EU members most affected by terrorism, whereas Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia are the least affected member states.26 (EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2007. Hague: Europol, 2007, pp. 14, 17, 26.)

EU member states initially reorganized their counter-terrorist infrastructures at the national level in the aftermath of 11 September, and then again attempted to consolidate these reforms after the attacks in Madrid, significant efforts have also been made Europe-wide in order to develop a larger and more comprehensive counter-terrorist framework.

Immediately after 11 September, the European Union divided its program into five thematic divisions:

1) Police and Judicial Cooperation,

2) Bilateral relations with third countries and regions (the Middle East, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Reconstruction of Afghanistan, Humanitarian Aid),
3) Air Transport Security,
4) Economic and Financial Measures, and
5) Emergency Preparedness.

Of the five themes, only the third was a direct response to 11 September – the rest were already in the pipeline due to the work underway to improve coordination in counter-terrorism. The response is thus not a new program of action to counter the ‘new terror’, but rather, an enhancement of the old. The European Union also developed a 69-point ‘road map’ – a Plan of Action –

compiled by the Council, which is to be considered a 'living' document and embodies the changes underway. (Hippel, 2005, p. 17).

**7. Why Europe?**

European states – notably France, but also Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom – are home to large Muslim populations, where terrorist cells have been able to blend in with less fear of being detected, or to infiltrate and use local Mosques, community centers and *madrasas* as bases for recruitment, or even to operate with the tacit knowledge of the government. The Madrid attacks demonstrate how lethal these extremists can be, while it appears that planning for the attacks took place not only in Spain, but also in France, Morocco, the Netherlands, and Norway. (Crawford, Levitt and Huband, 2004).

The attitude of the UK security services prior to 11 September, for example, was that the presence of a fairly sizeable number of known hard-line radical Islamic extremists, such as Abu Hamza al-Masri, the London-based radical imam, was not harmful to the United Kingdom per se. The government was aware that they were living in UK cities, potentially even planning operations, using their adopted cities for logistics and financing for attacks. The misconception was that they would only be attacking targets back home, and not those in the United Kingdom. (Veness). Yet even so, during this period, the UK government still monitored their activities with intelligence and police assets, and were reluctant to extradite them because of concerns that they would be tortured or be subject to the death penalty. The French, on the other hand, who often referred to London as *Londonistan* for this very reason, have a deeper understanding of the extremist Islamic terrorist threat owing to their long-standing experience with North African terrorism and insurgency movements. (Hippel, 2005, p. 19).

Since the majority of the EU reforms were underway before 11 September, they were designed primarily to counter old terrorism. Though the dividing line between international and some national terrorist groups is beginning to blur, there are distinctions between old and new. Despite European expertise and experience, which has inherent value and can contribute to the design of a new approach, a successful counter-terrorism

campaign that can undermine 'New Terrorism' will require a more holistic response, and not just a changing of existing counter-terrorist infrastructure.

Some states have already shown that they can adapt old terrorist tools to confront the new terrorist threat. For example, in Spain, all provinces have a counter-terrorist infrastructure in place, which varies depending on the region: in Basque country, for obvious reasons, the focus is on the 'Euskadi Ta Askatasuna' (Basque Fatherland and Liberty, or ETA), while in Almeria, it is more geared to confront Islamic threats. Even so, this was not enough to prevent the attack on 11 March 2004. (Hippel, 2005, p. 21).

Europeans are divided as to whether they consider their own cities, civilians and assets targets for future attacks, or whether they assume that only America and American assets abroad are primary targets. After the Madrid attacks, more European countries may have considered themselves potential targets, yet even so there remains the perception that Spain became a target only due to its involvement in Iraq. Others argue that all western countries are targets. Indeed, bin Laden has included Spain – referred to as Al Andalus – in his lists of targets for several years because the Spanish ejected the Moors from the peninsula in 1492 after a near-800 year occupation. After the Madrid attacks, a tape was played on 15 April on *Al Arabiya*, allegedly with bin Laden's voice, explaining that the real target was America and offering a truce to European countries, 'our neighbours north of the Mediterranean'. He proposed the establishment of a 'European committee to study "the justice" of the Islamic causes, especially Palestine'. He said, 'The door of reconciliation is open for three months from the date of announcing this statement . . . For those who want recon-ciliation, we have given them a chance. Stop shedding our blood so as to preserve your blood.' European leaders obviously rejected this call, but it did indicate a willingness to negotiate, something previously not witnessed in his campaign against the West. (Wright, 2004).

If these countries assume they are not targets, and additionally have not been involved in Iraq or even Afghanistan, they will also not respond in a comprehensive manner until they are themselves victims of an attack. But even for those who believe they are targets, if they already have a significant counter-terrorist infrastructure in place, while at the same time have been

tightening their internal security in line with aforementioned reforms, it is not entirely obvious what additional measures they could take on their own. One senior Spanish official remarked well before the March attacks, 'I don't know what else we can do in Spain that we are not already doing to protect ourselves.'(Hippel, 2005, p. 31).

## 8. Conclusion

Democratic societies are by definition vulnerable to terrorist attacks from external and internal factors. Borders are porous; the Internet is truly transnational, while all European societies have been dealing with the positive and negative aspects arising from their increased diversity.

There is no doubt that the struggle of countering terrorism is guaranteed to be a lengthy one. Many spectacular attacks have been planned years in advance and meticulously designed, thereby attesting to the terroristic organization's incredible patience and capabilities. Despite the fact that the world is giving up many efforts to fight terrorism it does not seem like the end is near. European states have achieved many success on the way to get rid of the problem, but terrorists are developing their tools too.

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