

THE CONCEPT OF LONE JIHAD

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Recent terrorist attacks in the world, including the tragedy in Nice show that terrorist acts carried out by jihadists still pose a significant threat to international security and demonstrate some new forms of activities.

The leading jihadi organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS have expressed their support to the idea of the Lone Jihad considered as essential way to fight the enemy in the Western countries. For instance, ISIS spokesman, Mohammad al-Adnani encourages sympathizers to resign from travel to so-called Caliphate and to carry out attacks in the West. Besides, in the latest edition of the Inspire magazine, Al-Qaeda stresses that the organization no longer has a monopoly on conducting local jihad and it supports creativity of militants, who shall implement available resources and opportunities in order to carry out attacks. However, Al-Qaeda adds that the organization is ready to serve inspirations and advices elaborated in particular issues of the magazine.

The term, lone wolf " is not clear and does not refer to literal, individual and solitary activity. The name is rather conventional and depends on profiles of potential terrorists, ability of indoctrination as well as way of preparing and carrying out the terrorist attack. The concept includes **two categories of persons**.

The first group concerns former militants trained in jihadist camps in the Middle East or those who participated in battlefields of Syria and Iraq. It is evident in the case of Abdelhamid Abaaoud who was responsible for a series of bombings in Paris in 2015 and Najim Laachraoui, the member of the group responsible for the attacks in the airport and the metro station in Brussels in March 2016. They both were trained in ISIS camps and participated in fights. The attacks demonstrated efficient coordination of activities,

appropriate choice of means and methods, as well as appropriate logistic and financial support needed to organize synchronized actions in several places at once.

The second group reflects persons who were born in the West or those who live in Western countries from their childhood. They often have the nationality of Western countries or national identity cards. Moreover, they did not participate in direct combats in the Middle East or training camps. This type of insurgents corresponds with brothers Carnajew responsible for attacks on the Boston Marathon in 2013, Rizwan Syed Farook responsible for the shooting in San Bernardino in December 2015 or Tameen and Omar who attacked gay club in Orlando. The profile also refers to Larossi Abballa who stabbed a policeman and his wife in their own home on 13 June 2016 or Mohamed Lahouiaej Bouhlel responsible for the Nice attack and Muhammad Riyad who headed the assault on train in Wuerzburg in Germany. This type of Jihadists freely chooses means and goals within their own opportunities. They use limited logistic and financial support from ISIS and establish small group of fighters or they act alone with cold steel and homemade bombs. For example, Said Mohamed Lahouiaej Bouhlel worked with other members of ISIS, who provided necessary weapons and funds. Besides, the group couldn't prepare sophisticated attacks based on explosives or a car bomb. Using a large vehicle, which targeted peoples on the promenade in Nice was much easier for the inexperienced, newly recruited fighters.

Recently, jihadist groups have tended to the second-class fighters. In fact, regional groups in the Middle East are absorbed in local battlefields and everyday problems caused by ongoing offensive against ISIS and Al-Qaeda camps in the various countries in the Arab-Muslim world.

Moreover, jihadists in the Middle East are facing growing difficulties of free travel and relocation around the world, especially after the attacks in Paris and Brussels, which have increased anti-terrorist actions and surveillance of insurgents coming back from Syria and Iraq. Besides, intensification of migration crisis has mobilized authorities and services such as Frontex, which reinforced protection of borders and circulation of illegal migration. Another factor regards financial limits caused by recent bombings of refineries, warehouses and vaults controlled by ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

It should be pointed out that the second-class fighters living permanently in Western countries, are not regarded with suspicions by police and counter-terrorist services, which focus on foreigners and individuals who travelled to Syria and Iraq. Furthermore, the second-class fighters make a valuable contribution to jihad because they achieve spectacular and violent targets with minimal funds and support.

All lone wolves are equally exploited by jihadist propaganda regardless of their allegiance to the organization and real support. ISIS or Al-Qaeda groups usually claim responsibilities of particular attack by posting a message that informs about the event and confirms the allegiance of the lone wolf to the organization. All militants are glorified and encouraged to carry out other similar acts.

It should be also stressed that successful attacks headed by lone wolves rely on massive propaganda campaign that inspires and motivates future fighters thanks to

appropriate manifestos, audiovisual materials and direct online communication based on encrypted messengers such as Telegram and Tumblr.

The agitation campaign targets different persons, regardless of their origin and religion. For instance, the second-class fighters usually hold European citizenships or identity cards and they live in Western cultures without bigger problems and they are not a devout Muslims widely known to local Muslim communities and imams. Their contacts with Islam usually rely on propaganda materials as well as online conversations with radicals scholars, who present attractive visions of the faith and selected values that change their objectives and perspectives in everyday life.