

Contemporary terrorist threats to the security of Central Europe

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Abstract

From the beginning of the 21st century, terrorism has been evolving to take the form of various acts of violence committed by terrorists. It is characterized by close relation to history and the political situation in the world. The development of research on security in the 21st century in Europe clearly shows that security is an independent research discipline whose main goal is to obtain a multi-faceted, profound and synthetic picture of reality, perspectives and threats. Due to this, it is vital to analyse contemporary threats for Central Europe.

Currently, Western European countries are struggling the most with intra-state terrorism. Its effects lead to the destabilization of national integrity and threaten social security. This situation is also important for neighbouring countries and international organizations they belong to, such as the European Union or NATO. Moreover, terrorism is growing in the Balkans and the Caucasus region. The emerging threats make Central Europe vulnerable on all sides.

Terrorism, as a phenomenon and, simultaneously, a form of weapon for the growing number of its supporters, requires immediate attention. The complexity of this phenomenon requires defining ways to counteract and prevent its occurrence in the future.

Introduction

Bearing in mind the contemporary threats to internal and national security, it is important to determine the phenomenon we are forced to struggle with. Terrorism is a form of fighting used for more than 2000 years and is characterized by a sudden action aimed at causing destabilization of the attacked entity. Its transformation and development have caused it to be the greatest threat to state security today. It has a substantial impact on the functioning of governments, organizations and societies, causing global disintegration, which currently cannot be stopped or controlled by any of the entities appointed for that purpose. Despite the fact that almost all the countries in the world struggle with terrorism in various forms and with varying intensity, the actual and rational method of stopping it and eliminating its expansion to other countries has not been found yet. The analysis of terrorism and terrorist activities is related to the characteristics of the terminology and concepts defining them. The interpretation of terrorism, due to numerous modifications, extensions and harmonization with national

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strategies, is necessary in order to identify the entities which will be responsible for fighting it. The basis of the research is to distinguish between terror and terrorism².

The scientific definition of terrorism was already developed at the beginning of the 20th century. One of the first characteristics was suggested by Eugen Walter who stated that terrorism constitutes an impulsive action marked by violence which evokes an emotional reaction producing a social effect³. In 1934, Jacob Hardman described terrorism as an activity related to the systematic use of aggression, but with the use of terrorist methods⁴. Mr. Moore described terrorism as a negative necessity arising from aggression⁵. Mr. Rapoport looked at the issue differently and he said that terrorism and terrorists are taking voluntary actions which have no moral limits in order to inflict enormous damage. He distinguished between terrorist activities undertaken for political purposes and as part of extremist attacks⁶. Mr. Laqueur, who described terrorism as systematically-repeated actions to achieve political goals, agreed with this concept⁷.

Central Europe is defined in different ways, depending on the context and structure of the undertaken research. It means a cultural region, traditionally including countries between France and Russia. It can be understood as fluid, but generally makes sense on many levels. Based on the analysis of the sources, nowadays this region includes: Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland⁸. Due to cross-border threats, the cooperation of the above countries is very important in order to maintain the required level of security in the region.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 changed the perception of terrorism. An anthropologist, Scott Atran pointed out that: “probably never in the history of human conflicts, has such a small number of people, with such small possibilities and means frightened so many”⁹. The phenomenon of terrorism requires states to remain vigilant on a regular basis and involve many entities. Terrorism can take different forms in France, Poland, Austria and Ukraine.

Contemporary terrorist threats

The concept of modern terrorism, mainly perceived as religious terrorism, is primarily associated with the activities of radical Muslim groups. The shock of the inhabitants of Europe mainly results from the violence of attacks and determination in their conduct, both in the USA and in the European Union. The innovative techniques in carrying out attacks and planting

² Julian, R. I.: International terrorism in the 21st century - 16 years after 9/11 2001. CBU International conference on innovations in science and education, 22-24 March 2017, Prague, Czech Republic.

³ Walter, E. V.: Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence. Oxford University Press, New York 1969, p. 5.

⁴ Hardman, J. B. S.: Terrorism. In: Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. S. Johnson. New York 1934, pp. 14 and 575.

⁵ Moore, B.: Terror and Progress - U.S.S.R.: Some sources of change and stability In the Soviet dictatorship. Cambridge 1954, p. 11.

⁶ Rapoport, D. C.: The Politics of Atrocity. In: John Jay Press. New York 1977, p. 47.

⁷ Laqueur, W.: The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction. Oxford University Press. New York 1999, pp. 3-7.

⁸ Kogan, Irena: Delayed Transition: Education and Labor Market Entry in Serbia. In: Kogan Irena/Noelke Clemens/Gebel Michael (Eds.): Making the transition. Education and labor market entry in Central and Eastern Europe. 2011. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 141-165.

Transcarpathia: Perekhiral Region at the “Centre of Europe” (Google eBook), Region State and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Routledge 2013, p. 155.

⁹ Atran, S.: Talking to the Enemy: Religion, Brotherhood, and the (Un) Making of Terrorists. New York 2011, p. 14.

bombs have so far been associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But now they have become a phenomenon which is more and more common in Western Europe. The global reach of terrorist organizations and their ability to conduct simultaneous attacks is also a fact¹⁰. Gradually, since the London attacks in 2004, we have been witnesses to an increase in the number of terrorist attacks in the European territory¹¹. The attacks in 2015-2017 were particularly bloody, with seven major terrorist attacks in France alone¹². The context of an increase in terrorist threats following the 2001 attacks in the United States is clearly visible. The development of terrorism has had a particularly negative impact on the situation in Europe, and therefore in the European Union, currently forming the greatest threat to international security¹³.

Depending on the conducted investigation (findings of international security organizations, requests of the national prosecutor's office, research of scientists, as well as depending on the statements announced by terrorist organizations¹⁴), it is concluded that in the 21st century (in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Georgia, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, Italy, Sweden, Ukraine), 4 organizations and one informal group have marked their presence in Europe through terrorist attacks or activities of a terrorist nature¹⁵:

- Al-Qaida (Al-Qā'ida, including Al-Shabaab, Al.-Nusrah Front, AQIM)¹⁶.
- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant¹⁷.
- Boko Haram¹⁸.
- The Talibans¹⁹.
- Unidentified group - Lonely Wolves²⁰ ("self-appointed terrorists")²¹.

The four groups defined above were jointly responsible for 74% of terrorist murders worldwide in 2015²². They carried out attacks in 92 countries, and more than a half (55%) of those attacks were in the areas affected by the war, i.e. Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Nigeria and

¹⁰ Pfeifer, Joseph W.: International Anti-Terrorism Preparedness. FDNY Foundation. New York 2018, pp. 22-25.

¹¹ Wejkszner, A.: Ewolucja terroryzmu motywowanego ideologią religijną na przykładzie salafickiego ruchu globalnego dżihadu. Poznań, pp. 303-305.

¹² Éireann Raidió Teilifís: Timeline - Terror attacks in Europe. 17.08.2017.

¹³ Immenkamp B./Sgueo, G./Voronova S./Dobrova, A.: The fight against terrorism. EU policies - Delivering for citizens. June 2019, p. 3.

¹⁴ Cf.: <https://jihadology.net>.

¹⁵ Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2016 - Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2016, pp. 13, 38, 42, 43, 44, 52-57. Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2017 - Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2017, pp. 13, 49, 72-78. Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2018 - Measuring the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2018, pp. 3, 4, 39, 40, 45, 46, 61.

¹⁶ Stenersen, A.: Thirty Years after its Foundation – Where is al-Qaida going? In: Perspectives on terrorism, Volume 11, Issue 6, December 2017, pp. 1-12.

¹⁷ Galang, M. A.: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria: Profile and Strategic Assessment. NDCP Policy Brief, 18.04.2015, No. 2, pp. 1-4.

¹⁸ Walker A.: What Is Boko Haram. United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 308, June 2012, pp. 1-15.

¹⁹ Sheikh, M. K./Greenwood, M.T.J.: Taliban talks past, present and prospects for the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan. DIIS Report, Copenhagen 2013, pp. 7-22.

²⁰ This is someone who prepares and commits violent (terrorist) acts alone, outside of any command structure and without material assistance from any group. He may, however, be influenced or motivated by the ideology and beliefs of some group.

²¹ Wejkszner, A.: Samotne wilki kalifatu?: Państwo Islamskie i indywidualny terroryzm dżihadystyczny w Europie Zachodniej. Warsaw 2018.

²² Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2016 - Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2016, p. 4.

Pakistan. Most attacks (in terms of their number) took place in Bangladesh, Egypt, the Philippines, Libya and Syria²³.

In 2019, another classification of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world was made. In 2018, the following four groups were responsible for 9 223 killings, accounting for 57.8% of deaths caused by terrorist attacks worldwide:

1. Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State²⁴ – a branch of the Islamic State²⁵.
2. Boko Haram.
3. Islamic State (ISIL).
4. The Talibans²⁶.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, in terms of the impact of terrorism on the functioning of countries in 2018, in the region of Central Europe²⁷:

- Austria took 79th place in the world (89th place in 2017),
- The Czech Republic took 90th place in the world (87th place in 2017),
- Germany took 39th place in the world (40th place in 2017),
- Hungary took 110th place in the world (99th place in 2017),
- Poland took 102nd place in the world (110th place in 2017),
- Serbia took 116th place in the world (125th place in 2017),
- Slovakia took 126th place in the world (114th place in 2017),
- Slovenia took 138th place in the world (138th place in 2017),
- Switzerland took 124th place in the world (112th place in 2017).

For example, in Austria, two attacks of a terrorist nature were recorded in 2016-2019. On 1 and 7 of March 2018, two knife attacks took place in Vienna. The first was committed by a man of an Afghan origin who wounded four people²⁸. In the second attack, which took place in front of the Iranian embassy, the terrorist was killed. The perpetrator was a 26-year-old Austrian of Egyptian origin. Authorities said, he sympathized with radical Islamist ideology, but the exact motive was subject to further investigation²⁹.

²³ Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2017 - Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2017, p. 4.

²⁴ The Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) is a branch of the Islamic State in Central Asia, and its origins date back to 2015. The Islamic State announced its expansion in the Khorasan region, which historically covers modern Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

²⁵ Center for Strategic & International Studies: Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K), <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/terrorism-backgrounders/islamic-state-khorasan-k>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

²⁶ Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2019 - Measuring the impact of terrorism. University of Maryland 2019, pp. 15-17.

²⁷ Own study based on: Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2018 - Measuring the impact of terrorism. Sydney 2018 and Institute for Economics and Peace: Global Terrorism Index 2017 - Measuring the impact of terrorism. Sydney 2017.

²⁸ Simon, D./ Murphy, Paul P.: 4 people stabbed in Vienna. CNN, 7 March 2018.

²⁹ Francois Murphy, Vienna knife attacker had radical Islamist sympathies. In: Austria says, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-austria-attack/vienna-knife-attacker-had-radical-islamist-sympathies-austria-says-idUSKCN1GP1E4>, accessed on 13.03.2018.

Migration in the context of terrorist threats

Since 2002, between 1.5 and 2 million of new immigrants have arrived in the European Union (1.4 million in 2013 and 2 million in 2016³⁰). This means that there is a need to provide security conditions not only to the countries belonging to the community, but also to the arriving people. This is connected with a need for proper and effective border management. If, within the open European Union, deprived of internal borders (the Schengen area), which currently encompasses 28 countries and nearly 550 million inhabitants, it is not possible to verify and define the tasks and needs concerning migrants, there is a huge threat to the security and international integrity of Europe. Preventive actions must take into account both the rights of immigrants and the rights of EU citizens³¹. It is necessary to stop illegal migration and eliminate international criminal groups involved in this practice. The external borders of the EU are the last bastion in the coordination and verification of the in-flowing population. Only systematic and careful selection will guarantee proper preparation of both parties - migrants and EU Member States - for long-term cooperation³².

We should also remember that individual terrorists and groups are good at assimilation and leading their lives in other societies. They head to liberal countries, such as, for example, France³³ or UK, where everyday life, active participation in social life and raising children do not pose a problem for them³⁴. They become a part of a larger group, they receive support and transfer their ideologies to a foreign territory. They create their own “city within the city”. Many years of such activities mean that they become a focal point which draws attention to itself and forces the authorities to take decisive action. One of the methods is, for example, police interventions in districts (ghettos) dominated or inhabited by followers of one religion³⁵. In addition to legal work, many of them engage in “money laundering”³⁶, trafficking drugs, human trafficking or pimping and prostitution³⁷.

This is also associated with the development of a pejorative nature of participation in social life in a given country, by creating negative and, later, terrorist behaviour. Stigmatizing the followers of Islam³⁸, associating them with a negative social group, pathologies, as well as media activities all mean that many young people begin to become indoctrinated, profess their faith more strongly, decide to entrust their lives to a religious guide and often travel to their

³⁰ Eurostat, Migration and migrant population statistics. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics, accessed on 22.11.2018.

³¹ Apap, J./Radjenovic, A./Dobrev, A.: EU policies – Delivering for citizens: The migration issue. European Parliament. March 2019, pp. 1–11.

³² Szczerba-Zawada, A.: Polityka imigracyjna Unii Europejskiej jako determinant bezpieczeństwa państw członkowskich UE. In: Bezpieczeństwo narodowe Polski: zagrożenia i determinanty zmian. Scientific editor: Chabasińska A./Czachór, Z. Warsaw 2016, p. 86.

³³ Driggers, S.: Les Banlieues de France: how a failure of integration has led to the spread of extremism. <http://georgiapoliticalreview.com/les-banlieues-de-france-how-a-failure-of-integration-has-led-to-the-spread-of-extremism/>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

³⁴ Malik Kenan: Assimilation’s Failure, Terrorism’s Rise. In: The New York Times, 6.07.2011.

³⁵ Schram, J./Fredericks, B.: Muslim ghettos in Europe are breeding grounds for terror. In: New York Post, 22.03.2016.

³⁶ de Galhau, F. V.: Money laundering and the financing of terrorism: in the face of heightened risks, our fight is being stepped up. Banque de France, 26.06.2019, <https://acpr.banque-france.fr/en/intervention/money-laundering-and-financing-terrorism-face-heightened-risks-our-fight-being-stepped-up>, accessed on 1.12.2019.

³⁷ Peltier, E.: Crack Cocaine Makes a Paris Neighborhood ‘Hell’ for Users and Residents. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-austria-attack/vienna-knife-attacker-had-radical-islamist-sympathies-austria-says-idUSKCN1GP1E4>, accessed on 28.12.2019.

³⁸ Macron warning on stigmatising Muslims amid France veil row. BBC News, 17.10.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50079997>, accessed on 9.12.2019.

country of origin³⁹. They become young jihadists because of the barriers which society has created over the years and which young people cannot cope with. They adopt a model of a self-confident, determined terrorist, convinced of the righteousness of the only faith. It would also be valuable to take such activities into account in the future analyses of the radicalization process.

Conclusion

Terrorists who will want to attack Central Europe in the future will probably come from orthodox Islamic organizations, they will be rebels who currently live in the Middle East and eastern Ukraine, and people who become radical in their own ideology which also includes the anti-Muslim ideology⁴⁰. However, we may not overrule the option that terrorist activities will also be undertaken by people who live in large cities, such as Berlin or Vienna, and have nothing to do with the ideology presented so far. The present experience shows significant activation of terrorists who take action on their own, who are referred to as “lone wolves”, or who operate within the framework of “home grown terrorism” (people who become terrorists are usually those brought up in a given country, orthodox believers in some ideology. They become extremely radical and they carry out attacks in the territory of the state whose citizens they have been since birth or where they have lived for several years)⁴¹. An excellent example can be the attack in France where, on 23 March 2018, in Carcassonne, in the south of the country, a terrorist killed 4 people and seriously injured another 15 people⁴². He was a citizen of the French Republic and lived there on a permanent basis⁴³. This type of terrorism is also perceived as a sociological curiosity, where religion dominates the instilled ideologies of the state⁴⁴. It is also important to take into account nationalist and right-wing organizations⁴⁵ which may undertake acts of a terrorist nature as well.

The issue of the present security in Central Europe depends on many external and internal factors which interact with each other. Their multiplicity means that states are obliged to constantly react and adapt to the dynamically-changing conditions⁴⁶. One of the important internal factors will be the geopolitical situation, and another the undertaking of measures aimed at ensuring security in the country. External factors are those which determine international cooperation and the establishment of alliances, as well as those which directly affect national security in connection with sharing borders with other countries⁴⁷. Terrorist threats directly affect both internal and external factors⁴⁸. That is why, for example, Poland and Austria may

³⁹ Abdel-Fattah, R.: The stigmatisation of Muslims as 'could-be terrorists' has produced a toxic social order. In: *The Guardian*, 9.10.2015.

⁴⁰ Baisse des actes racistes, antisémites et antimusulmans en 2017. In: *Le Monde*, 1.02.2018.

⁴¹ International Institute for Counter-Terrorism: The Paris Black Friday 13/11/2015 Attacks - What do we know? What should we do? Special Report, 15.11.2015, p. 2.

⁴² Mareschal, E./Piquet, C.: Attaques dans l'Aude: une proche du suspect placée en garde à vue. In: *Le Figaro*, 24.03.2018.

⁴³ Louet, S.: Attaques dans l'Aude: Radouane Lakdim était fiché S depuis 2014. In: *Le Figaro*, 23.03.2018.

⁴⁴ Speckhard, A.: *The Militant Jihad in Europe: Fighting Home Grown Terrorism*. Amsterdam 2009, pp. 146-151.

⁴⁵ Comment l'extrême droite radicale se recompose en France. In: *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/comment-lextrême-droite-radicale-se-recompose-en-france-94072>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

⁴⁶ Rękawek, K.: *Człowiek z małą bombą - o terroryzmie i terrorystach*. Wołowiec 2017, pp. 181-185.

⁴⁷ Żurawski vel Grajewski, P.: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Wymiar militarny*. Warsaw 2012, pp. 390-405.

⁴⁸ Brunarska Zuzanna., Lesińska, Magdalena: Migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: THE present situation and possible future, The perspective of Poland. In: *Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe impact of visa abolition*. Jaroszewicz, M./Lesińska, M. (Eds.): OWS Report, Warsaw 2014, p.88-108.

currently feel anxious about the terrorist threats in the French Republic, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, leading to increased migration from Eastern Europe, as well as due to migration from Africa and the Middle East⁴⁹.

Cross-border security in the European Union is closely related to constant migration, not only from Ukraine, but also from the Balkans and the Middle East⁵⁰. Due to the regulations which were introduced during the migration crisis in 2015, and due to the apparent lack of agreement between Germany, Austria, Hungary and Croatia on the registration and admission of migrants, it is impossible to fully control the inflow of people. The lack of awareness of who crosses the border, illegal migration, as well as repeated use of false documents⁵¹ – all create a certain kind of deadlock, causing a dangerous situation for the society in which a terrorist attack becomes real⁵².

It is important to point out that since borders were established between countries, governments face a dilemma⁵³. On the one hand, it is important to ensure freedom of crossing borders, maintain a level of security and help foreigners by encouraging them to work in the country. On the other hand, dealing with the problems of illegal migrants, especially in the context of terrorist threats, should be a priority for the government in ensuring the security of its citizens.

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⁴⁹ Kotyrlo, E.: European migration crisis as an outcome of globalization. In: *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach*, No. 323, Katowice 2017, pp. 77-86.

⁵⁰ Serdakowski, J.: *Perspektywy rozwoju bezpieczeństwa transgranicznego RP*. In: *Rozprawy Społeczne*, Biała Podlaska 2015, No. 2 (IX), pp. 28-33.

⁵¹ Thorpe, N.: *The Road Before Me Weeps*, Yale University Press, London 2019, p. 132.

⁵² Thorpe, N.: *The Road Before Me Weeps*, Yale University Press, London 2019, pp. 138-141.

⁵³ Maksimczuk, A./Sidorowicz, L.: *Ochrona granic i obsługa ruchu granicznego*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 15-21.

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