

REVIEW ARTICLE

ANALYSIS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – INJURIES, CASUALTIES AND WEAPONS

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Summary

International terrorism becomes one of the most dangerous problems at the beginning of the 21st century. Terrorist attacks have serious impact on politics, economy, military as well as security forces, international law and legislation, and psychological issues. International terrorism is legally characterised not only as a threat to the life and property of individuals, but also as a worldwide threat to human civilization, social order, international public order and values. The aim of this contribution is to specify the incidence of terrorist attacks from 1970 to 2013 in European countries and to characterise their imminent impact on the number of casualties. Furthermore, the contribution aims to specify the type of these attacks, weapons employed in them and numbers of casualties corresponding to various types of weapons. The analysis was based on data from databases and existing studies. The monitored period witnessed a slow but steady increase in the incidence of terrorist attacks in the EU countries without any significant changes. The types of weapons employed in these attacks did not change much, either.

Key words: Terrorist attack; European countries; type of weapons; casualties

INTRODUCTION

International terrorism is rightly regarded as one of the greatest threats to world security and stability. Terrorist attacks that have occurred in recent years around the world have further highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach. The term terrorism

can be defined in many ways. It was first used during the French Revolution to describe methods used by the government against its enemies (David, Malacka, 2005). Schmidt and Junkman conducted a survey among terrorism experts in 1988 and found out that there were at least 109 definitions of terrorism. The analyses frequently featured the following items (Schmid, Jongman, 2005):

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- Violence, force (83.8 %),
- Political motive (65 %),
- Fear (53 %),
- Threats (48 %),
- Psychological effects and expected reactions (41.2 %),

- Discrepancy between the target of the attack and its casualties (37.5 %),
- Systematically premeditated action (32 %),
- Methods of fight, strategy, tactics (30.8 %).

According to (Hoffman, 1998), terrorism is a method of using force or threat, done by concealed individuals or persons supported by groups or a country. The act of violence is aimed at innocent persons or civilian targets. The main aim of terrorist acts is to cause fear. Possible side effects may include drawing attention (propaganda by action), or achieving partial advantages or concessions from the attacked participant. The ultimate goal of terrorism is a political change.

The North Atlantic Alliance uses the following definition of terrorism: “The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives“ (NATO, 2009), (Chote, Norman, Wagstyl, 1999). This definition considers terrorism as not only the real abuse of force but also a threat of doing it. This NATO definition of terrorism is however only of an informative character.

For its legislative and official needs, the European Union uses the Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism. It reads that “offences under national law, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation, shall be deemed to be terrorist offences” (EUR Lex, 2002). This definition of terrorism is legally binding. Among the targets most threatened by possible terrorist attacks belong high-traffic areas, strategic and government buildings.

Terrorist events are usually subdivided into two varieties: domestic and transnational terrorism. Domestic terrorism is home-grown with consequences for only the host country, its institutions, citizens, property, and policies. As such, domestic terrorism involves perpetrators, victims, and targets solely from the host country. Through its victims, targets, supporters, perpetrators, or implications, transnational ter-

rorism concerns more than a single country. If the terrorists cross a border to perpetrate their acts, then the attacks are transnational. Terrorist incidents that begin in one country and conclude in another country (e.g., an international skyjacking or the mailing of a letter bomb to another country) are transnational terrorist events.

Terrorism can take many forms in relation to the employed weapons. There are classical approaches and modern terrorism. Classical terrorist methods include bomb attacks against civilian targets, letter bombs, kidnappings, taking and executing hostages, plane abductions, and threats of violence. These classical methods are continually perfected and terrorists use new technologies and approaches: mobile communication devices (explosive detonated by mobile phones in Madrid), means of transport (cars with explosives in Bali, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan), internet sites (records of executions by Iraqi terrorists). Other classical methods are attacks against works of art in galleries and elsewhere, damage to vehicles, creating chaos, spreading alarming news leading to chaos and causing casualties by trampling. Modern terrorist methods include using chemicals, bacteria and computer viruses. Their impact is almost invisible. They may cause more casualties and deal more damage, though. Among these methods belong:

- Biological terrorism intending to target civilians, which exploits microorganisms able to cause dangerous and contagious diseases;
- Chemical terrorism is the form of terrorism that uses the toxic effects of chemicals to kill, injure, or otherwise adversely affect the interests of its targets. The severity of injuries depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent used, and the duration of exposure (Chosak, Sawyer, 2005).
- Cyberterrorism can be also defined as the intentional use of computer, networks, and public internet to cause destruction and harm for personal objectives (Matusitz, 2005). Objectives may be political or ideological since this can be seen as a form of terrorism (Weimann, 2005).

Currently, most terrorist groups use classical methods, which are tangible, capable of hitting the intended target and of drawing media attention. Terrorist activities also include crimes that otherwise belong to ordinary criminality or organised crime. These crimes often serve to gather financial resources for terrorist operations, infiltration into governmental structures, or blackmailing. From thousands of socio-

economic, governance and attitudinal variables analysed, three groupings of indicators show a multivariate significant relationship with the Global terrorism index (GTI) (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2014):

- Political stability,
- Intergroup cohesion,
- Legitimacy of the state.

There is no systematic link to poverty measures, or to several broader economic development factors such as the Human Development Index or its sub-components such as mean years of schooling, or life expectancy. Similarly economic indicators such as year to year GDP growth do not correlate. Trade as a percentage of GDP is the only economic indicator to show moderate correlation (European Commission, 2015).

The above mentioned facts apply to terrorist attacks all around the world. The following text, however, focuses on the situation in European countries, which are, in relation to the above mentioned factors, less threatened by terrorism than other continents. The aims of this contribution are as follows: to determine the number of terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2013, to characterise their imminent impact as the number of casualties, type of attack, employed weapons and number of casualties caused by various types of weapon. Finally, it will be discussed to what

extent various country legislative systems are prepared for possible threats and impacts of terrorism.

METHODS

The used research methods include an analysis of accessible studies focusing on effects of terrorism and a retrospective analysis of data from terrorist attack databases - Global Terrorism Database. The analysis should determine whether or not the following presumptions are valid:

- Most attacks in European countries between 1970 and 2013 were carried out by means of classical terrorist methods;
- The number of terrorist attacks in the monitored period remains more or less the same.

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The situation in European countries concerning the attacks between 1970 and 2013 is presented in the figure no. 1. European countries¹ have always understood terrorism as a domestic phenomenon to be responded to by means of internal policy and procedures of individual countries.

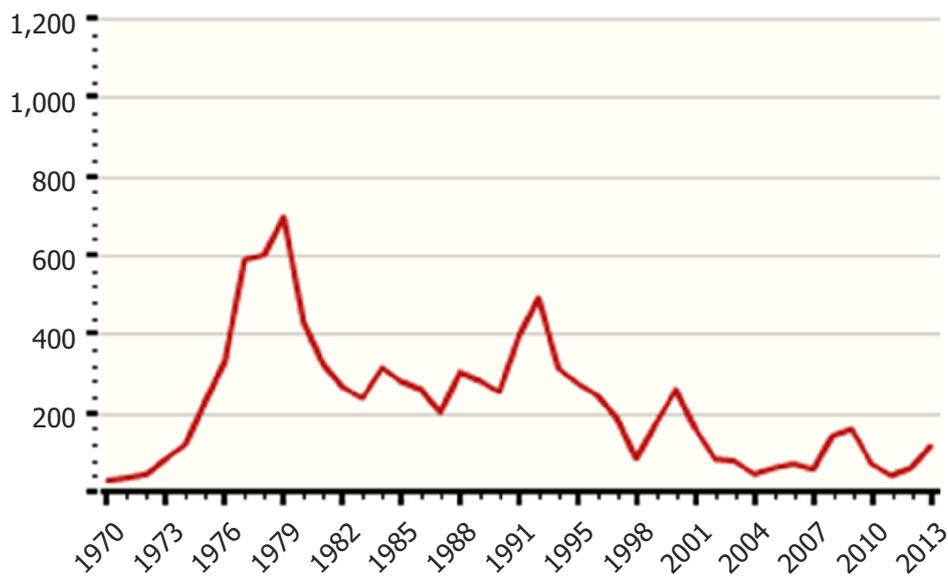


Figure 1. Incidence of terrorist attacks in European countries between 1970 and 2013, source: own processing according to (GTD, 2014)

¹ Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Iceland; Italy; Latvia; Malta; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Great Britain; East Germany (GDR); Kosovo

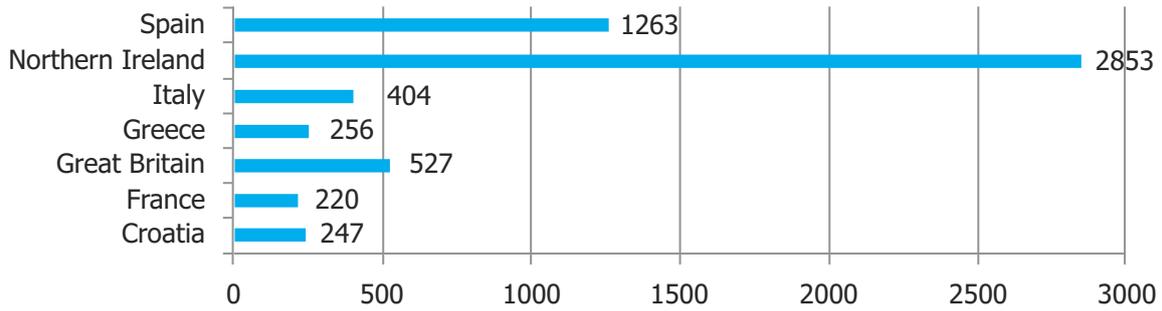


Figure 2. Fatalities in individual countries between 1970 and 2013, source: own processing according to (GTD, 2014).

Relation between terrorist attacks and casualties

Figure 2 depicts numbers of fatalities in terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2013. The graph includes only countries that suffered 50-plus fatalities. Most terrorist attacks happened in the Netherlands (4,117), followed by Spain (3,200) and Great Britain (1,140). On the other hand, Andorra, Vatican and Gibraltar

witnessed only one terrorist attack each. Northern Ireland suffered most fatalities, namely 2,853, followed by Spain with 1,263 victims.

The table no. 1 shows targets of terrorist attacks and terrorist groups in the countries that suffered most fatalities, namely Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Spain.

Table 1. Targets of terrorist attacks and terrorist groups between 1970 and 2013.

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland	Spain	Italy	
Target	Business	226	626	1005	425
	Private Citizens & Property	77	1341	298	127
Groups	Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)	0	0	1970	13
	Irish Republican Army (IRA)	273	2290	0	0
	Red Brigades	1	0	0	209
	Unknown	136	546	594	641

Source: own processing according to (GTD, 2014)

Table 1 implies that Business was the primary target in Spain, Italy and Great Britain. In Northern Ireland the primary target were Private Citizens & Property. The most active terrorist groups were the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA) in Spain. Italy witnessed in most cases attacks by unknown assailants followed by the Italian organization named Red Brigades.

Relation between terrorist attacks and injuries

Similar information is shown in Figure 3 depicting the number of persons injured in terrorist attacks

between 1970 and 2013. Most injuries were suffered in Spain (4,841), Northern Ireland (2,814) and Great Britain (2,790). European countries not included in this graph counted less than 200 injured persons, most of them even less than 100.

Relation between terrorist attacks and the type of weapon

Between 1970 and 2013 explosives were the most frequently employed type of weapon. It was used 1,910 times in Spain, 1,162 times in Corsica and 780 times in France. Firearms were another frequently employed type of weapon. They were used 1,910 times

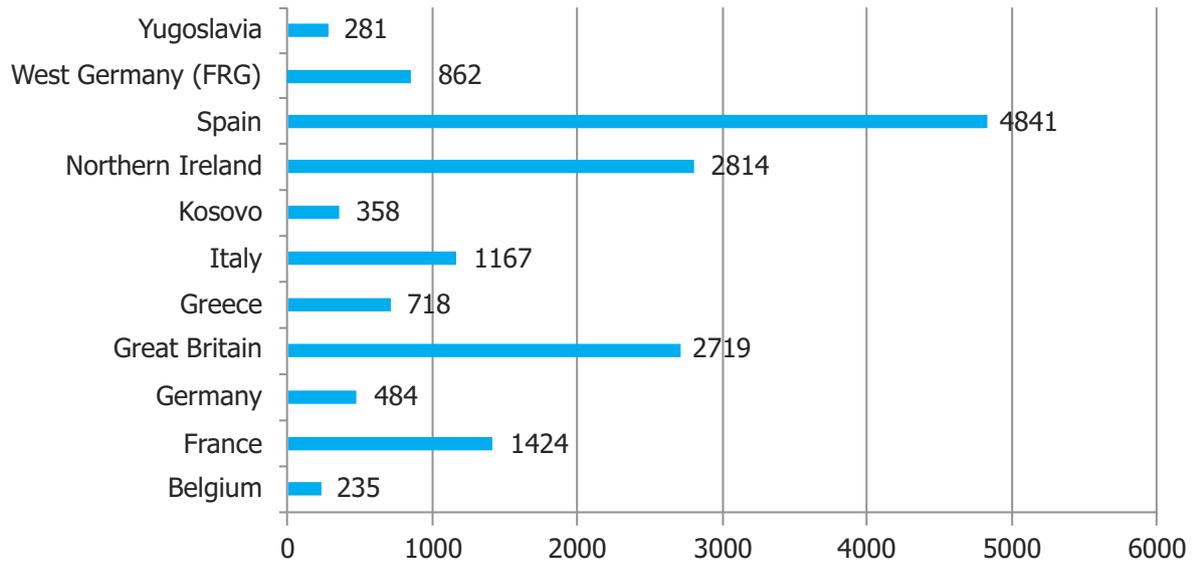


Figure 3. Number of injured persons in individual countries between 1970 and 2013, source: own processing according to (GTD, 2014).

in Northern Ireland and 114 times in Yugoslavia. Incendiary devices were the type of weapon employed in classical methods of terrorist attacks. They were used for instance 323 times in Germany. Incendiary devices are most frequently employed. No country witnessed more than 120 attacks using this type of weapon. The relation between the number of casualties and the type of weapon between 1970 and 2013 suggests that firearms killed most persons, namely 3,704, followed by explosives with the death toll of 2,682 and incendiary devices with 128 victims. As for the number of injured persons, explosives injured 13,900 whereas firearms injured 2,119 persons.

RESULTS

The total number of fatalities in the monitored period is 6,863 and that of the injured persons is 17,267. Table 2 summarises data about casualties between 1970 and 2013 in relation to the employed type of weapon. Data confirm the presumption about the most frequently employed weapons in terrorist attacks, with explosives and firearms causing most of both fatalities and injuries. Modern terrorist methods like biological and chemical weapons were used less frequently. At the same time, the main objective of classical methods is to draw attention, which makes it easy to identify their use. The monitored period witnessed 313 injured persons and 240 fatalities caused by unidentified weapons.

DISCUSSION

Number of individual attacks between 1970 and 2013 was stable. Nevertheless, the period since the beginning of 2014, which is not included in this research, has seen quite a lot of terrorist attacks in several European countries. This fact spurs governmental efforts to take measures against terrorist attacks. In 2010 the European Commission adopted an Internal Security Strategy for the period from 2010 to 2014. In the coming months, a European

Table 2. Number of casualties in relation to types of employed weapons, source: own processing according to (GTD, 2014)

Type of weapon	Number of fatalities
Biological	0
Explosives/Bombs/Dynamite	2682
Firearms	3704
Chemical	7
Incendiary	128
Melee	90
Vehicle (not to include vehicle-borne explosives)	7
Unknown	240
Total amount	6858

Agenda on Security will be adopted, as foreseen in the Commission working programme for 2015. The fight against terrorism is principally a national competence. However, the European Union supports Member States' efforts in the following ways (European Commission, 2015):

- Creating a legal environment and framework for cooperation;
- Developing common capabilities and systems such as the Schengen Information System (SIS) or the Civil Protection Mechanism;
- Supporting, notably financially, the establishment of concrete and operational cooperation between practitioners and front line actors via, for example, the Radicalisation Awareness Network, ATLAS (network of the rapid intervention forces), Airpol (net-work of airports' police) in the fight against terrorism and working together with Member States and stakeholders e.g. in Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear and explosives expert groups or the standing committee on precursors;
- Ensuring that security and fundamental rights are built by design into all relevant EU level policies such as transport, energy, etc.
- The Internal Security fund also provides financing to Member States in the field of internal security, including fight against terrorism.

Although previous analyses show low numbers of chemical and biological attacks, the Commission will finalise the implementation of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) and Explosives Action Plans by the end of 2015. The basis for the Commission's work on the security of CBRN substances and Explosives are two action plans: the EU CBRN Action Plan, which was adopted in 2009 and comprises a wide range of 124 actions from prevention and detection to preparedness and response, to be implemented by end of 2015, and the EU Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives, with 48 actions.

The above mentioned analysis showed that attacks in European countries were carried out by means of classical terrorist methods and their number was constant and very low. The current challenge is the terrorist shift to "soft targets" (BIS, 2015), which are generally all places with a large concentration of people (hypermarkets, cultural and sports events, tourist destinations, transport hubs, public transport). A relatively new phenomenon is

the refocusing of terrorist activities to countries which do not belong to the group's primary goals. This can be a problem of the Czech Republic thanks to the location in the center of Europe. It is possible to predict that terrorism will generally increase in these areas:

- number of terrorist acts;
- the increasing of the affected territory;
- and the establishing of new weapons and misuse of new technological applications.

CONCLUSION

Modern society has no reliable protection against anonymous terrorist attacks. Terrorism is highly adaptable. It can cause damage in various conditions and places. Despite efforts of democratic countries and their security bodies to curb international terrorism, it annually strikes in about 60 countries. Terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon and as such it requires global measures, particularly wide international cooperation in taking and implementing these measures. Information sharing and cooperation among intelligence services are instrumental for successful fight against terrorism. All forms of terrorism are negative as they may throw the whole society into disarray politically, socially, and economically.

The aim of this contribution was to analyse terrorist attacks in the period from 1970 to 2013 in European countries and characterise their immediate impact on the number of casualties. The analysis confirmed both the assumption that most attacks were carried out by classical terrorist methods as well as the one that the situation in Europe remains more or less the same. In the period for which there are no accessible data for European countries yet, we have been witnessing European government's increased efforts to implement measures to contain terrorism. These measures are related to modern methods of terrorist attacks and their final version should be available by the end of 2015.

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