

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# TERRORISM – DEFINITIONS NEEDED

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### Summary

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 highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach. Formulation of the problem is a prerequisite for successful work, but the main problem is that there is no single definition of terrorism. View on possible definitions and important concepts are mentioned in this article.

*Key words: terrorism; definition; concepts*

## INTRODUCTION

The first definition of terrorism was introduced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century France. Without this definition it was hard to understand what terrorism is or how to deal with it. There were many attempts to define terrorism over the years, most of them were crisis-centered and often followed authors political view (Arnold, et al., 2003).

The fundamental mechanism of terror is based on the old Chinese proverb: “Kill one, frighten ten thousand”. During decades, methods of terrorists changed but results remain gruesome. Global terro-

rism is inexpensive, it does not need vast human resources, it attracts attention of the whole world and gives potential for the weak to frighten the strong ones (NATO Review 2016).

Currently, there is a wide variety of instructions how to make certain arms, such as Molotov cocktail, gun-cotton, dynamite, and nitroglycerin and trinitrotoluene (TNT) on the internet. Furthermore, there is also specification of the production of detonators, timers, and the construction of actual bombs. Especially in recent years, all types of media play an important role in the planning of terrorist attacks, as they devote considerable attention to these reports. One might argue that, consequently, media popularize terrorist demands or the terrorist agenda itself (Tomášková, Marešová, & Kuča, 2015). International terrorism is therefore rightly regarded as one of the greatest threats to the world security and stability (Cothorn, 2004).

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The legal professions require a definition that can be used for the successful prosecution and conviction of accused terrorists. Defense or an appeal by an accused terrorist is easier if the crimes are ambiguously defined (Bruce, 2013). This phenomenon can be interpreted differently with respect to an entity that performs this interpretation, historical period or purpose or intention which it was used for.

## DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

Defining terrorism is the most inexplicit part of terrorism studies (Sinai, 2010). The notion of terrorism comes from a Latin word "Terroro" meaning "terror scare, frighten, intimidate". Most academic definitions highlight the combination of violence, politics, sociology and psychology. The threat of violence has the same weight as actual violence (Bruce, 2013). Agreement on definitions of terrorism would assist the research and study which may progress to counter measures for the benefit of democratic governments and society.

The media use the word "terrorism" as a term enticement for people to read newspapers and watch television news. It does not use the exact definition, but calls for action "terrorism" to attract the public's attention. Major public information available on terrorism is through the media and the frequent abuse of this word will result in becoming a cliché.

In 1983, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) formulated one of the most widely used definitions of terrorism. According to this definition, terrorism is "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." (United States Department of State, 2004)

Walter Laqueur (Laqueur, 1977) uses the definition "terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective by targeting innocent people".

Tore Bjørge (Bjørge, 2005) states that "terrorism is a set of methods of combat rather than an identifiable ideology or movement, and involves premeditated use of violence against (primarily) non-combatants in order to achieve a psychological effect of fear on others than the immediate targets."

According to (IBANEZ, 2009), terrorism can be characterized as a "well thought series of violent and

intimidating acts that is directed against non-combatants citizens and is scheduled to psychologically impress a much larger number of people than the direct victims, and to serve to achieve concrete, almost always a political, goal. "

Osama bin Laden described "good and bad terrorism" (Richardson, 2006). "Terrorism can be commendable and it can be reprehensible. Terrifying an innocent person... is objectionable and unjust, also unjustly terrorising people is not right. Whereas terrorising oppressors and criminals and thieves and robbers is necessary for the safety of people and protection of their property...The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and the aggressors and the enemies of Allah, the tyrants, the traitors who commit acts of treason against their own countries and their own faith and their own prophet and their own nation. Terrorising those and punishing them are necessary measures to straighten things and to make them right."

## CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF TERRORISM

With the emergence of international terrorism there is a need of its scientific investigation at all levels. New conceptual framework for understanding the identity of terrorism is drawn up by Arena and Arrigo. They assume that for a redirection of the academic and practitioner behavioral science communities for understanding the importance of culture and society while investigating one's membership in and identity through militant extremist organizations is necessary to take into account both the theoretical and the application work. (Arena & Arrigo, 2005)

In terms of the fundamental determination of terrorist threats and their prevention, the motivation of terrorists must be assessed in particular. Based on motivation, it is possible to create a classification system of terrorism which shall include even the "non-political forms" of terrorism (MVCR, 2009). We can note three basic types: criminal terrorism, where terrorist actions are carried out primarily for the purpose of obtaining personal material benefits; pathological terrorism, where terrorist actions are carried out primarily for the purpose of psychological satisfaction; and the last type is political (ideological) terrorism, where terrorist actions are carried out for social motives without direct acquirement of material benefits. This category can be subdivided into: far-left terrorism, far-right terrorism, ethnic terrorism, religious terrorism, environmental terrorism, vigilant

terrorism (seeking “law and order”, which, allegedly, the government is unable to establish; i.e. “Black Brigades” in Latin America targeting the homeless population) and single-issue terrorism (single agenda – against abortion etc.).

The extent of terrorism can be categorized into domestic and international terrorism, connected with the number of countries where terrorism occurs or resources and/or logistics which are acquired for terrorist activities ((START), 2014). Terrorism, specifically international terrorism, together with organized crime and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, presents the most serious threat to the entire human civilization.

### “CLASSIC” TERRORIST METHODS

The following section presents "Classic" terrorist methods as described in the Czech Republic (MVCR, 2009).

Shooting, the use of cutting and stabbing weapons, beating are actions directed at an anonymous crowd, actions aimed at specific people (politicians, economic figures, artists, journalists), actions aimed at specific nations or groups of people (Israelis, Americans, soldiers, police officers, etc.). The struggle between Kurds and Turks, taking place in many western countries, where such countries only serve as the passive battleground, also falls into this category and specific targets could be foreign guests/officials.

Bomb explosion is a method where the location is the target and the destructive power lies solely in the force of the bomb, fire, or collapse of a building. Bomb explosions could be directed at random buildings, locations where a lot of people meet (public squares, supermarkets, arenas, amusement parks, places of cultural events, hospitals), specific institutions (embassies, courthouses, headquarters of political parties, government offices, barracks), locations frequently visited by tourists, location of the movement of specific persons (car bombs). It could also attack buildings or places inhabited or visited by specific nations or groups of people: hostels, restaurants. Explosions can be aimed at causing confusion at the time of elections and referendums, damaging major communication lines (bridges, railways, subways, airports, data cables, pipelines, water supplies); these can be attacks on the means of transport - planes, trains, buses, boats - where

the aim is to destroy the subject, not take over, sabotage economic operations (factories, power plants, forest fires) the economic impact is also present during most attacks mentioned below.

Explosions initiating other destructive activities can be defined by attacks on chemical plants; cooling units of ice hockey arenas, where ammonia is used, also posing a hazard, attacks on nuclear plants (nuclear power plant, school reactors, research institutions etc., or even nuclear weapons silos) – a conventional attack on these targets is much easier and cheaper to carry out than the manufacture or theft of an atomic bomb, attacks on a water reservoir (dam or levee), posing the risk of flooding large territory, attacks on places of high concentrations of flammable materials, causing environmental pollution, explosions initiating an avalanche or landslide cannot be excluded, same as attacks on a prison, posing the risk of escaped prisoners destabilizing the situation in the country.

Kidnappings, taking of hostages is possible to describe as kidnapping of anonymous or specific important individuals (associated with other demands – the release of other terrorists, the reading of terrorist demands in the media); in terms of ransom, such act could be called a simple criminal offense; may be carried out on land, boat, plane or occupancy of a building and the listing of demands.

Various forms of violence against tourists can be defined as attacks directed at tourists, aimed to specifically harm those countries dependent on tourism – it is particularly important to monitor these actions in terms of threats for foreign tourism of Czech citizens.

Mail violence is represented by mail bombs (used by an American assassin Unabomber or Austrian Fuchs).

Methods belonging to group “Other” are possible to define as attacks on art monuments in galleries and elsewhere, damage to the vehicle operability (sugar in the petrol tank, sand in the wheel mechanisms of locomotives), the spread of confusion, alarming messages leading to chaos, resulting in injury or people being trampled (it can be done without the use of any weapon).

The last method named as “Specific objectives of post-materialistic and environmental (ecological) terror” includes a damage to restaurants (McDonald’s, KFC), attacks on people wearing fur coats, attacks

on slaughterhouses, laboratories carrying out experiments on animals etc. and hammering of nails into the trunks of trees that could be harvested by lumberjacks.

As we can see in figure 1, the most frequent type of a terrorist attack in the world is bombing / explosion.

explosion, the second one is the armed assault and the third is assassination. The purpose of this could be found in figure 2, where the graph of damage in billions in USD is shown.

The following charts are based on data from the Global Terrorism Database ((START), 2014).

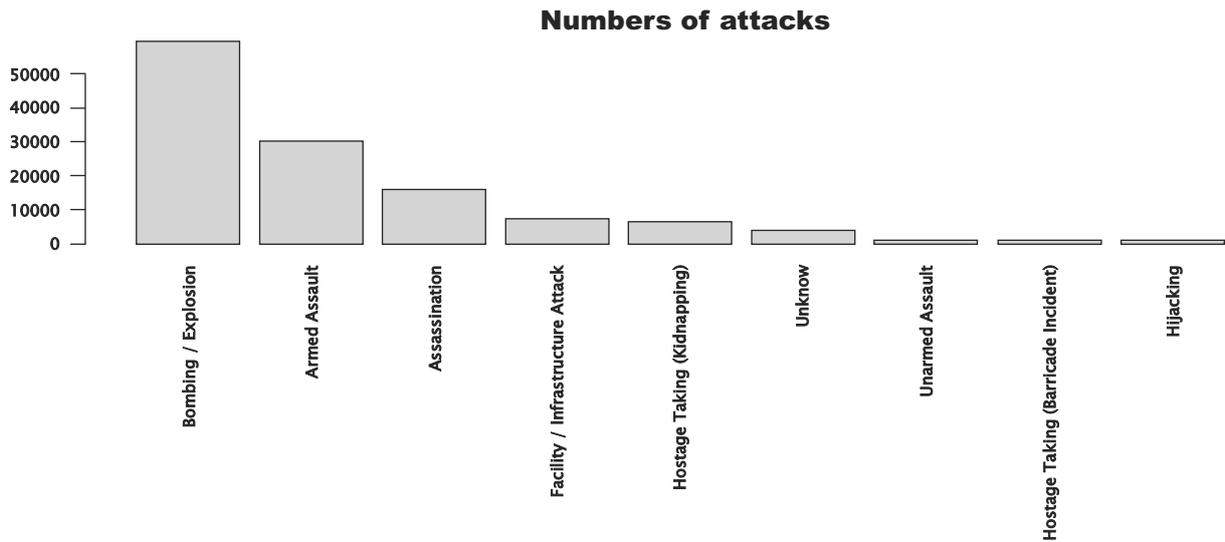


Figure 1. Number of attacks according to the type from 1970 to 2013

Since 1970-2013, the greatest damage was caused by bombing / explosion. Other types

of attacks caused much less damage, as we can see in figure 2.

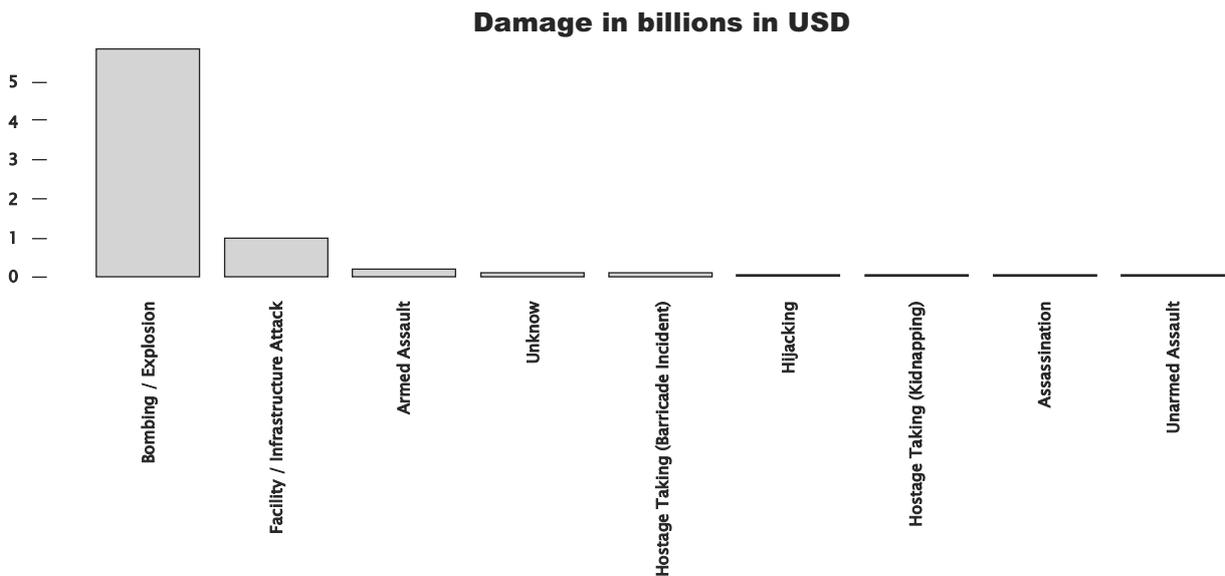


Figure 2. Damage according to the type from 1970 to 2013

## CONCLUSION

We can perceive the risk of terrorism as a probability function of interactions between individuals and organizations. But views based entirely on a probability should be used with caution because even though they are based on concepts of risk of terrorist threats and attacks, their outcomes come with uncertainties. Terrorism exists as a concept for many years and its definition is gradually evolving. Nowadays, when we see terrorism in all media, a definition may be a problem. There is no uniform consensus on the definition, we allow people to carry out horrific crimes in the name of terrorism.

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