

GLOBALIZATION AND THE CONTEMPORARY TERRORIST PHENOMENON

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Abstract: *Globalization describes a process that essentially expresses the fact that events that take place in one part of the world, regardless of the level in which they take place, produce effects, consequences or repercussions on societies in another part of the globe.*

In this article, we want to emphasize that one of the effects of globalization is the intensification of contemporary terrorism.

Keywords: *terrorism, globalization, terrorist attacks.*

Preliminary considerations

"Globalization is a process in which geographical distances have ceased to be a determining factor in establishing economic, political and socio-cultural relations."¹ The first scientific paper to dedicate a special article to the term "globalization" is Gordon Marshall's *A Dictionary of Sociology*, published in 1998. In terms of the origin of the word, it derives from the "global" adjective, meaning to "spread throughout the world." The exact definition of the term has given rise to a number of controversies, scientific disputes or different opinions, and there is no statement or definition that fully satisfies the scientific community. However, there is a constant: the phenomenon interests the whole world, and the dynamic and long-lasting nature of the process is recognized by most of those involved in the study of the phenomenon. There is a risk that the term will be associated with "mondialization". However, the two terms express two completely different actions: **globalization** refers to a complex set of processes aimed at achieving international integration at the economic, military, political, socio-cultural and security levels, while **mondialization** is a movement that does not include liberalization, is more about declaring a specific territory -

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¹ R. Lubbers, J. Koorevaar, *The Dynamic of Globalization*, Tilburg University Seminar, 1998, p. 1.

a city or a state, for example - as an international, global territory with responsibilities and rights at the international level.

Globalization can create great opportunities and can undoubtedly lead to progress in certain areas. The effects of globalization are multiple and can have varying intensities, a reality that can lead to some reluctance, if not hostility in terms of full integration and assimilation by some societies or states, in their acceptance and exploitation by others. The effects can be positive and negative, just as the very process that generates them can unite or divide humanity. Generating effects is a reality and they manifest themselves in the economic, political, military, cultural, religious, social, demographic or environmental areas. The interaction between them can be constructive or destructive and the perception and understanding of these aspects is important because it can influence decisively, accelerating or on the contrary, reducing the pace and complexity of transformations globally. We can thus identify that one of the main characteristics of the phenomenon is the rapid flow, constantly growing and often generating discrepancies of goods, services, people, capital, ideas, information, technology, culture, fashion, weapons and criminal actions.

Contemporary terrorism in the age of globalization

The extensive treatment of the subject of globalization has highlighted the influence of the process in relation to another phenomenon that has undergone a transformation difficult to imagine, starting with September 11, 2001: terrorism. If we refer to the period of time spent by humanity since the attacks on the twin towers in the United States of America in 2001, in terms of transformations undergone by societies, of response systems designed to counter terrorist actions and activities and how they have changed the way people live, we can say without a doubt that we are wrong that the years from then until now "have been an epoch in itself."² It is the period in which the way of communication and interaction of people has known an unprecedented development, in which the Internet has become a daily and indispensable presence in all fields, in which financial flows have seen a great increase in mobility, the movement of

² Florian Coldea, interview, available at <http://intelligence.sri.ro//combaterea-terorismului--competitivitate-sau-competiție/>, accessed at 23.11.2020.

people from one part in the other of the globe reaching maximum parameters, an era in which globalization has produced its full positive effects in all corners of the world. At the same time, however, associated with the positive effects, the negative effects have also increased exponentially: the gap between poor and rich countries has widened, pollution has taken dramatic proportions, terrorism has been exported worldwide, experiencing a frightening development, or including the health crisis caused by the infection with the SARS COVID-19 virus humanity had to face since the beginning of 2020. Starting from the premise that globalization is an objective, natural process of integrating humanity in a whole, we must agree that it has serious consequences for the security of the international community in general and creates the conditions for the activation of international terrorism.

In the light of the lessons identified from the associated activities and the attacks produced in recent years worldwide, we can deduce some characteristics of contemporary international terrorism in the context of globalization:

- the number of attacks carried out with cynicism, cruelty directed primarily against ordinary people, accustomed to the obvious purpose of instilling fear, panic, horror, the feeling of insecurity among society;
- the spread of religious terrorism, in particular Islamist radicalization in Europe, or nationalist terrorism, (if we refer to Turkey and the Kurdish issue, for example, in the context of military operations on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border);
- easy access to technology, financing of activities or communication between independent cells, facilitated by advances in technology of all kinds, lead to new modes of operation, raising significant challenges to efforts to prevent and combat terrorist activities;
- the use of non-traditional means, outside the known typology (vehicles in the middle of the crowd, aircraft turned into weapons, etc.), the element of surprise greatly amplifying the effect;
- recruiting new followers from fighters actively involved in the conflicts in North Africa, integrated into the migratory flows caused by military operations and who are highly motivated from a religious or

nationalist point of view. This type of terrorist is based on a very good military training to which is added the experience of conflict zones;

- the use of the online environment, the Internet or social platforms as a space for recruiting new followers, propagating and multiplying terrorist ideologies or amplifying the effect of the actions taken;

- attacks by citizens born and raised in that country, and here we are referring in particular to Europe. In the last 10 years, the major attacks that have shaken European countries have been committed by European citizens, the second or third generation of emigrants, who have been raised and educated in the spirit of European values and traditions, being practically assimilated by the host population, enjoying the same rights and freedoms. This state of affairs made it impossible for them to be monitored by the security forces, resulting in terrorist attacks with very serious consequences, including contributing to the development of a deep nationalist feeling among the host citizens by amplifying some historical religious faults that seemed to be over;

- the diversification of payment methods (various fast money transfer services, non-personalized prepaid calling cards that offer free Internet access, various financial applications, etc.) allow the financing of terrorist activities, not requiring geographical proximity between payer and payee, making it very difficult the activity of supervising the financial flows destined to finance terrorism;

- although most states do not want the presence of the terrorist phenomenon, the lack of harmonization of legislation creates loopholes speculated by terrorist organizations, despite legislation adopted by the UN to prevent and combat terrorism;³

- organized crime, drug and human trafficking or the underground economy facilitate the development of activities associated with terrorism, as a risk factor for security in general or as risk factors or even terrorist activities;

- the divergent interests of the great powers, manifested mainly in the positions adopted in the currently existing conflict zones around the

³ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Terrorism Prevention, available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism/>, accessed at 23.11.2020.

world (Libya, Syria, Iraq, Nagorno Karabakh, etc.) converge to prolong instability in those areas, which in turn become a easy environment for recruiting, planning and preparing terrorist activities that hit the democratic, civilized world.

We thus deduce that contemporary terrorism is strongly influenced by globalization, manifesting itself in a multitude of forms, generating significant effects at the level of world states both politically and economically, socially and especially security. The relationship between the positive and negative effects of the process is certainly influenced by the way in which the terrorist phenomenon has adapted and despite the efforts made, it has even evolved with the acceleration and accentuation of the globalization process.

Conclusions

Terrorism is a scourge that humanity has been facing for a long time, so it cannot be considered a new phenomenon on the world stage, unlike globalization. If we refer to the contemporary period, which began with the beginning of the century, we find that the speed of the spread of terrorism worldwide has increased greatly. Also, through the media, social platforms or the Internet, the speed of the effects of terrorism is almost instantaneous today. Thus the effect of a terrorist attack is greatly amplified, the places chosen for the attacks (if we refer to the latest produced in Europe, in October-November 2020, in France and Austria) are chosen to maximize the harmful effect on the population.

Former United Nations President, Kofi Annan, said in an interview that "only a world organization is capable of meeting global challenges." Starting from the premise that the terrorist act is "an act of war carried out in peacetime"⁴, we consider cooperation, at local, zonal, national or international level as one of the best measures to prevent and counter the terrorist phenomenon, especially at a time when globalization is intensifying. Increasing the level of security culture can help us better

⁴ Oprea, Gabriel. Botoș, Ilie. Bogdan, Vasile. *Sistemul de răspuns la terorism*, Bucharest, Militară Publishing House, 2014, p.145

understand how we can protect the values we believe in. There are experts who believe that "the campaign against terrorism should consider, first and foremost, a contact of civilizations and a mutual acceptance and not a clash of civilizations."⁵ It can be true, it can be a complex solution, and it can be a beginning in eradicating the terrorist scourge: eliminating the causes of the phenomenon and not just its effects.



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⁵ Andreescu, Anghel. Radu, Nicolae *De la „înfrângerea terorii” și „războiul sfânt” la „speranța libertății”*, Bucharest, Rao Publishing House, 2015, p.419.