TERRORISM AND MASS MEDIA TERRORISM

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Abstract: Over the time, it has been found that terrorist attacks bring to the fore the two entities that obtain immediate benefits only from the mere presence of the other one: terrorist organizations and the media.

Even if both the media and terrorist organizations obtain certain benefits from terrorist attacks (audience, respectively advertising), they are not the only beneficiaries. In some situations, governments may speculate on this type of violence by exacerbating the terrorist threat and stepping up security measures, which often involve restricting rights and freedoms or diverting public attention from social and economic issues.

The real goal of terrorism is not the act itself, but the reaction obtained, the effect, the impact, the cause of terror. This goal is also achieved with the help of the media.

Terrorism and the media are in a relationship as complex as it is obvious. This is determined by a mutual distrust that intersects with a mutual need: ***terrorism needs publicity, and the media needs an audience.***

Keywords: media, terrorism, influence, impact, threats, security.

Introduction

The link between terrorism and the media is a consequence of developments in the last century, especially in terms of the dynamics of the media. At the same time, as entering the daily existence of radio, television and, in particular, the Internet, reality has exceeded the condition of "story", as the case is with the written press. The reality lies, from the second half of the 20th century, under the sign of television "live transmission", and from the 21st century under the sign of Internet connection stability and transfer rate.

In order to restore the dimension of the concept change over the last hundred years, it is said that terrorist-type actions were originally excluding

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from the "target list" certain categories of people, such as: children, women and the elderly, in most cases, all civilians being considered "out of conflict". In Tsarist Russia, for example, those planning the assassination of Tsar Alexander II abandoned several attack plans because they did not provide security guarantees for civilians in the Tsar's suite. It can therefore be said that "old-fashioned" terrorism was a direct one – it was aimed at a change of political attitude on the part of society by killing or injuring the victim, in general an individual belonging to the top levels of the social hierarchy in that community.

As time went by, things evolved. Thus, it was found that, unlike absolutist states, modern democracies (including monarchies governed by constitutional law) cannot be influenced by the assassination of a member of the leadership, their policy remaining unchanged. Terrorism has adapted to the new reality, addressing a method of indirect attack. In the previous century, the targets of terrorist attacks have become ordinary people. These attacks have also been aimed at creating a state of anxiety among society through the existence of an unseen threat. The aim of the terrorist is for the public authority to prove incapable of removing this threat, so that, as a consequence, public confidence in the government and its policy is undermined. Moreover, frustrated for and fearful of the impossibility of defending themselves, the community will ask the authorities to accept the terrorists' claims in order for them to end the terror.

"The study of terrorism generally had a fairly small impact, training only a few academics around the world. However, after 11 September 2001, the amount of literature on terrorism exploded, with thousands of books and articles written on the subject each year"[1].

From this point of view, modern terrorism proves to be easy to use and difficult to combat. First, by not giving anyone immunity, terrorists have an infinite number of targets at their fingertips. They can choose when, where and how they will attack, so that the public effect is maximum. Moreover, if something does not work, the mechanism for claiming terrorist attacks offers the possibility of avoiding the visibility of failure: about a

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[1] Alexander SPENCER, *The Tabloid Terrorist, The Predicative Construction of New Terrorism in the Media*, Editura Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, U.K., 2010, p. 2.

failed, unclaimed attack, very little is spoken or not at all, in other words, it does not exist.

"Visibility" of terrorist acts – dependence on the media

It can be said that terrorism is conditional on one thing: the need to advertise the attacks. A terrorist movement becomes known simply by the fact that the media reports the incident, giving it to the public as a subject of analysis. Moreover, when the media, for various reasons, decide to overbid the significance of the incident, terrorist groups gain credibility and their political-ideological platform is made public, debated. Last but not least, their cause often comes to be assumed by various individuals simply by exercising the right to free expression. If the public is told about terrorism, then the terrorist's cause will get attention. This does not justify claims that a lack of news will mean a lack of terrorism, but it has implications on how journalists relate to terrorism.

This need for publicity, which only the presence of the media can satisfy, often induces a clear targeting of attacks. Targets thus become symbolic targets, as happened in the September 11, 2001, attacks: The World Trade Center in New York was the "heart" of the American economy, while the Pentagon – the emblem of the American military. Also, a symbolic objective was the attack on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, which was blown up in March 1992 (29 dead)[2]. But it is not only official buildings that can be targets of terrorist attacks. Technology itself, with all the infrastructure it entails, has symbolically become a preferred target of terrorists.

Dependence on technology can also manifest itself in communications, and a terrorist organization can attack computer networks. Such actions have constantly attracted the attention of the press and, by implication, the international public opinion. However, the media is, above all, the target of the persuasion effort from terrorist groups. In an effort to attract the public's attention, terrorists carry out their actions on the subject of their own media strategy, and this strategic calculation is based on the

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[2]   Cf.   *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992_attack_on_Israeli_embassy_in_Buenos_Aires.* accessed on 20.05.2020.

assumption that access to mass communication structures is an attribute of political power.

"Terrorists are known to use the internet mainly for the same reasons as anyone else:

-because of the low cost and the possibility to communicate virtually instantaneously with wide and often transnational audiences;

-the anonymity that facilitates engaging in "risky" or "embarrassing" behavior;

-the ease of access to information;

-the lack of censorship;

-the opportunity to interact with like-minded individuals;

-the ease with which text, images, and videos can be combined, up- and downloaded, transmitted, and shared between the Internet and other platforms, such as phones"[3].

Impact of terrorist attacks on the media

Terrorist acts have a significant impact on the media in both direct and indirect manner.

The direct impact is given by the terrorist acts themselves, i.e. the attacks committed in different places in countries considered as enemies by terrorist organizations. The attack itself is a privileged tool of external and internal communication, it allows exerting pressure on the state or company concerned and giving rise to a certain mobilization of the media. Internally, it allows showing the militants that the organization will go all the way and experience success. The inevitable stigmas of terrorist action - dead or injured people, collapsed buildings, contorted wagons - are just media objects. It is the media that gives the size of the confrontation between a terrorist group and a nation state.

In this era, the relationship between terrorism and the media is thought of following two dominant ideas. First, its amplification. Any result of a terrorist attack, even an insignificant one, will be symbolically amplified to give weight to the organization that executed it. It will aim to

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[3] Cristina ARCHETTI, *Understanding Terrorism in the Age of Global Media*, Editura Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, U.K., 2013, p. 40.

produce a feeling of fear disproportionate to the real risk, exacerbate fear through the vision of horror, or get a strong ligation to decision-makers.

Then, the second dominant idea is that terrorism uses the media to promote their demands, motivations and claims. It uses the force of the media as a weakness to impose its will. Everything happens as if there is a default contract, the terrorist provides the image and the media provides the impact.

"For terrorism to be effective, it must be communicated. If terrorism is supported, it must recruit new advocates. Once stories of terrorist activity reach the general public, organizations like Al Qaeda try to capitalize on advertising in their recruitment efforts. Online locations are particularly important in this activity"[4].

The indirect impact of terrorism on the media is achieved by television and the Internet. In addition, terrorist organizations have invented new media genres:

- televised sermons. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri were specialized in these "sermons" addressed either to the faithful, or the rulers and the enemy states. In front of the room (sometimes in a setting that evokes the Prophet and the refugee companions in a cavern), the preacher uses a literary language, interrupted by quotes from the Koran or classical Arabic poems. It is the kind of speech full of metaphors and quotes from the Koran that will be spread around the world, especially through television and the Internet.

- recruitment videos. There are clips showing the training or actions of terrorists, in a very pompous style, these workouts being done on a religious musical background. It all leads to the urge of young people to join them. Some of these videos are available on the Internet and are intended to be tools by which willing people are taught how to train to fight against enemies designated by terrorist organizations.

- wills of martyrs (suicide terrorists). Dressed in the clothes in which they will suffer martyrdom and on a background of ornate armbands with slogans, they explain the reason for their future act and the joy of joining the cohort of martyrs.

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[4] Philip SEIB, Dana M. JANBEK, *Global Terrorism and New Media*, Editura Routledge, New York, U.S.A., 2011, p. 34.

- filmed executions. This is probably the greatest impact genre. They are generally used to induce the idea that anyone who does not support the cause may be the next victim.

"Communication is at the heart of terrorism. The principal accomplishment of Al Qaeda on 9/11 was not killing several thousand people, but rather terrifying millions more through the reports and images of the attacks and changing the way many people throughout the world live"[5].

Ethical rules for the handling of information relating to terrorist acts

Journalists acknowledge that terrorism is constantly seeking to turn the media into mouthpieces of their messages, which is why both the codes of ethics of professional associations and the internal regulations of the various media institutions clearly warn of possible media slippages caused by an improper handling of terrorist acts.

Directors are aware that the coverage of terrorist incidents through radio and television provokes much stronger feelings among the public than when these events are presented by the written press. The Internet and electronic media seem much closer to reality: newspapers report on violence, broadcasts show it.

It can be said that the British Broadcasting Corporation's rules on media coverage of terrorist acts have been directly verified, with Britain facing this phenomenon since the beginning of the Irish conflict - the first decade of the 20th century - between Protestant loyalists and Catholic militias grouped into the self-entitled Irish Republican Army (IRA). Thus, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation *news inevitably means advertising. To keep the advertising value of news to a minimum, the BBC avoids anything that could idealize terrorism or give it the impression of legitimacy. This policy covers the images presented and the terms used. Editors will avoid as much as possible the terms by which terrorist groups try to portray themselves as legitimate – words like "execution", "court martial", "brigade". When military terms are used, they must be assigned.*

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[5] Philip SEIB, Dana M. JANBEK, *Global Terrorism and New Media*, Editura Routledge, New York, U.S.A., 2011, p. 16.

Care will be taken to ensure that terrorists and their associates are not presented in a favorable light. This is largely the case for each individual situation[6].

Media as a target of terrorism

The nature of journalistic activity, with its internal and external pressures and the specifics of terrorist practices oriented in demonstrating the capacity and readiness to resort to violence, give rise to different models of interrelationship between the two entities.

The first model is that of a *relative indifference* that arises in the context of the long absence from the public sphere of violent acts of a terrorist nature, situation that causes the total lack of journalistic interest in the field.

The second model is that of the *media strategy* in which the need for terrorism to make its message known, to gain some support in a segment of the public, on the one hand, and to induce fear and emotional shock among the general public, on the other.

On the other hand, journalists seek information wherever possible and respect the instigators of terrorists either by falling into the trap of sensationalism or by attributing a certain degree of legitimacy to the violent message (for various reasons that give them more or less credibility in front of the public). In this type of context, the media mission can be manipulated or only speculated in the achievement of terrorist purposes.

Another model is the one in which *threats and rupture* occur, through which each actor sees an enemy in the other. The media openly condemns terrorist acts and treats the grotesque and absurdity specific to them in terms of arguments for attracting public opprobrium, and terrorists, obviously recording a loss in perceived legitimacy, overbid on the line of threat and violence, forcing public space by including the media in the target category. In this case, it goes from handling to brute force. Experts consider "media targeting" a tactics that ensures attention-grabbing and forces media coverage of terrorist acts.

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[6] John David VIERA, *TERRORISM AT THE BBC: THE IRA ON BRITISH TELEVISION*, Journal of Film and Video Vol. 40, Nr. 4, 1988, pp. 28-36.

A series of letters contaminated with anthrax were sent to newsrooms in the U.S., Islamist militants from Pakistan, Al-Qaida supporters, lured American journalist Daniel Pearl under the pretext of an interview to kidnap and kill him, intelligence reports say Al-Qaida was surveilling the headquarters of Radio Free Europe in Prague for an attack, Beirut terrorists kidnapped or killed foreign correspondents for the messages they were transmitting in the West, Associated Press reporter Terry Anderson was detained as a hostage in Lebanon, the Separatist Basque ETA group assassinated a Spanish publisher who published an anti-terrorist manifesto.

The example provided by the kidnapping on January 23, 2002 of Wall Steet Journal reporter Daniel Pearl is conclusive, with the kidnappers' group providing a 24-hour deadline for all Pakistani prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay naval base to be released to prevent the journalist's murder. Although the deadline was extended by another day, U.S. Secretary of State at the time, Collin Powell, said authorities are doing everything possible to secure the hostage's release, while excluding the satisfaction of terrorist demands. On 21 February 2002, the State Department announced that the Pakistani authorities had received a videotape containing the journalist's execution.

Throughout this period, references to the evolution of the situation of the kidnapped journalist appeared in the international press and all news newspapers, and the media coverage of the case continued with the evolution of the investigation of suspects in extradition procedures, their trial and their conviction. Even if they did not get what they asked for, the terrorists enjoyed the full attention of the media internationally and caused an enormous drop in confidence in the American authorities who proved powerless in the face of the terrorist threat. Identifying journalists around the world with the American reporter crying by his wife and two daughters produced articles of an emotional load comparable to those dealing with the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Positioning in terms of direct opposition to the media implies on the part of the terrorists an awareness and assumption that this implies an anti-terrorist strategy of the media, but which, paradoxically, especially in the case of immature and non-professionalized communication systems, equally agrees to the initiators of violent acts by the fact that it materializes in an

increase in effects, a sharp demonization that will result in the propagation of terror. And in this variant the trap that stretches in front of the media is a fatal one in terms of their social and even political functionality (because the only entity that has to lose in all the situations described so far is political power - it will be blamed and considered incapable, regardless of the register in which terrorist violence is treated by the media).

In an open society it is impossible to guarantee that anti-terrorist strategies and actions will not be blocked or interrupted by some more or less responsible journalistic practices. As terror is directed at the media and not at the victims, its success is defined in terms of media coverage. And there is no identification, at the level of democratic states, of an alternative in which there is no media coverage precisely because it is acting in a free society. But in systems characterized by a strong political culture and mature democratic practice, media contributions in the fight against terrorism are so valuable that they outweigh the undoubted risks of prejudice brought by non-professional journalists.

Terrorism, the media and citizens' freedoms

In the paperwork called *„Information Terrorism: Can You Trust Your Toaster?"*[7] , American researchers M. Devost, K. Houghton and Neal A. Pollard make a particularly important observation about the risks posed by terrorism in modern society: in combating this scourge, democracies, especially Western ones, are faced with the danger of violating citizens' freedoms, in the desire to ensure the security of their citizens. The problem has little chance of being solved in the coming years, moreover, with the emergence of computerized (cyber) terrorism, new questions are looking for answers:

- which is the distinction, in virtual space, between a "political" and a "normal" crime, motivated, for example, by greed?

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[7] Matthew G. Devost, Brian K. Houghton, Neal A. Pollard, *Information Terrorism: Can You Trust Your Toaster?,* Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2000.

- how can a centralized security system respond to attacks from an enemy using the global digital communications network, this huge "spider web"?

- how can citizens' rights in terms of the privacy of correspondence be protected when you have to fight anonymous computer "pirates" (hackers) who are hiding under an anonymous email address?

Whatever solutions will be found, one fact remains certain for the coming years: the massive global presence of political violence. Terrorism will continue to be a common form of this type of violence. Widespread access to weapons, explosives and destructive technologies, together with the communication revolution brought about by the Internet, leads to a spectacular increase in the potential for action of terrorist groups. This translates into coordinated attacks, even simultaneous attacks in several states, as well as a spectacular increase in the possibilities of choosing a target whose coordinates are easy to find, thanks to modern media.

The 21st century has already become the individual century of so-called "lone wolf" terrorism. The modern type of politically motivated brutality is "homemade" and cannot be attributed to Islamic fundamentalism as such. Individuals with far-right tendencies kill to establish a society according to their own standards, without requiring great organization in the background, but autonomously and seemingly unpredictably.

The new approaches[8] aim to provide an in-depth view of this phenomenon, a new virtual and international dimension considered as a terrorism right, a recent dynamics, including mutual inspiration.

The subject of "*motivated far-right lone wolves*" has acquired in the meantime global relevance, achieving a new level of network work.

The idea of the book's author, Florian Hartleb[9], arose from what he discovered in his work in the case of the murder assault of 22 July 2016 and

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[8] Florian Hartleb, *Lone Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors*, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020.

[9] Dr. Florian Hartleb is Managing Director of The Hanse Advice in Tallinn (Estonia). He lectures at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and the University for the Saxony-Anhalt Police (Germany). His research focuses mainly on political radicalism and populism, with a particular focus on contemporary right-wing populism. He was named an official investigator for Munich following the terrorist attack on July 22, 2016 - in which nine people, plus the perpetrator David Ali Sonboly, lost their lives. The book Lone

was drawn up exactly five years to the day after the attacks of Anders Behring Breivik in Norway. After managing to take a look at about 4,000 pages of investigators' case files, he came to the clear conclusion that we are certainly not dealing with an apolitical act - as was officially believed and presented by the media, but with far-right terrorism in the form of a "lone wolf" attack. He later even learned about the American virtual media links between Munich and New Mexico, through a gaming platform that apparently aroused no suspicion, which official security services had overlooked and were unaware of.

Other cases in different countries highlight the new challenges we face. This is why the author differentiates this complex phenomenon as much as possible, clarifying it during its examination and thus generates the initiation of a discussion about possible counter-strategies.

Politicians and political machinates, security services and officials, as well as society face this challenge to the same extent. In the case of Munich, it took the authorities and the media more than three years to recognize that the attacks were politically motivated (and the nature of these motivations).

This topic continues to be extremely relevant. Thus, on October 9, 2019, Germany was rocked by a "lone wolf" attack by Stephan Balliet in broad daylight. The 27-year-old German carried out a "copy-cat" assault on the Christian church, but failed with his attempted attack at a Jewish synagogue full of people in Halle / Saxony Anhalt. He alone addressed his "fans" at the time, but became increasingly nervous as he committed his murderous act. He killed two people at random and repeatedly shouted about how he was "a loser". His actions were clearly politically motivated.

Balliet justified his action as anti-Semitism, as a struggle against the "Zionist Government of Occupation" (ZOG), but also through his hatred of feminism and Islam. Deeply linked to the expressions used in games, a new debate has begun on "*gamification of right-wing terrorism*".

Wolves: The New Terrorism of Right-Wing Single Actors is based, in large part, on the knowledge acquired while investigating the episode.

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On the other hand, the dilettantism or lack of commitment of the authorities highlighted why the actions in Norway and those on the Christian church were carried out.

The new terrorism is one of the most dangerous security threats in the world. In recent years, interaction, cooperation and, in some cases, even the fusion of Islamist terrorism (jihadist) and transnational organized crime have reached a new threat level, both to the states of the so-called "First World" and to the states of the "Second World" and "Third World".

The new terrorism, the international jihadism of the 21st century, poses an asymmetric threat to Western democracies. It recognizes neither national nor international borders, nor does it blur the boundaries between offensive and defensive behavior, war and peace, internal security and foreign policy, as well as criminal and political crimes.

The phenomenon of the new terrorism, studied and published in a topical paper[10], has emerged at both local and international levels and dimensions. In view of the asymmetric security threats in Western democracies as well as in conflict regions, this book examines, actors, strategies and tactics of Islamist terrorism and transnational organized crime around the globe. The authors develop an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the ideologies, forms of cooperation and technological means used in new forms of terrorism.

Furthermore, the authors investigate the interaction, cooperation and fusion of transnational organized crime and Islamist terrorism and **highlight new communication technologies as vital tools for terrorism.**

On a qualitative level, what is novel about "new terrorism" is explained on four levels: ideology; cooperation in organized crime and terrorism; **The Internet and media** with telecommunications of the 21st century as a crucial means of new terrorism; strategy and tactics of the new terrorism.

As for the media, terrorists will continue to count on their reflection in the media. Unfortunately, the phrase "Kill one and terrorize a thousand", attributed to Mao Zedong, risks having tragic connotations in an era of satellites and instant data transmissions. At the same time, local and regional

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[10] Stefan Goertz, Alexander E. Streitparth, *The New Terrorism. Actors, Strategies and Tactics,* Springer International Publishing, 2019.

conflicts, inter-ethnic or inter-faith, together with the rapid permeability of borders, call for new methods and strategies to fight, both nationally and internationally, against a cruel and faceless enemy. An enemy that often targets not the innocent and random victims of terrorist attacks, but the millions of viewers of television stations around the world. Terrorism and the media are in a relationship that is as complex as it is obvious. This is driven by a mutual distrust that intertwines with a mutual need: **terrorism needs publicity, and the media needs an audience**. The internal logic of both entities gives rise to a situation in which each responds best and most effectively to the needs of the other.

The issue is addressed in the literature in terms of functions, roles, effects and media influences within the social system as a whole and for each subsystem. If the first two mainly cover the functional and normative-deontological side of the mass communication activity referring to objectives, missions, the place occupied by media institutions in different social systems, the latter concern the more subjective, variable and inevitable, difficult to measure, implications and more or less expected, more or less beneficial results of this type of social communication.

"The development of communication technologies is essential not only for the military-industrial-media-entertainment link, but also for the public sphere and religion. In secular public sphere theories, religion in modern conditions is perceived as belonging to the private sphere, but this is more of a secular dream than an empirical reality in most modern societies"[11].

Above all, the media constitutes, by the very nature of the type of interaction it involves, entities that structure and determine social processes. In a fundamental way, the use of means of communication transforms the spatial and temporal organization of social life, creating new forms of action and interaction and new ways of exercising power, which are no longer linked to the division of a common space. In addition, the media have a universality that no other institution has: it offers a common baggage of ideas and images that goes beyond social and geographical barriers. The

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[11] Peter van der VEER, Shoma MUNSHI, *Media, War, and Terrorism*, Editura Routledge, New York, U.S.A., 2004, p. 14.

effects and influence of the media are manifested, as shown by the studies undertaken to date, coupled with the empirical experience of each of us, at the individual level, at group or collective level and at the level of society as a whole.

The scene of world social life was disrupted by the invasion of Coronavirus (COVID-19), a non-global health crisis was established which led the authorities of all affected countries to impose unprecedented social restrictions, forced new ways of carrying out social activities and people's lives.

"Thus, some of the state and private institutions, which continued their online activity, adopted one of the known forms: telework and/or working from home. Continuing to perform online work tasks employees (organization leaders and operators) may forget that they need to take special technical and organizational measures and thus make the privacy of the information they operate in this cyberspace vulnerable"[12].

Aware of the importance and dependence of this cyberspace, it had to be ensured greater security, both for him and by information-based information and information-based information systems. We thus consider that *"... in the analysis of a military information activity, information can be considered "raw material", "purpose", "target", "weapon" and that its protection is all the more important and more complex"[13].*

At the most basic level, malware and hacking tools have also become more readily available, allowing those without encoding conditions to understand and use them correctly. *The existence of this virtual environment or* **"cyberspace, recognized as a conflict environment, is based on the successful exploitation of data and information dependency"**, *manifested at the level of military structures, all the more so as they act in a hybrid conflict environment[14].*

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[12] Col. (ret.) Professor Gheorghe BOARU, PhD, *PANDEMIA DE CORONAVIRUS ȘI SECURITATEA CIBERNETICĂ*, Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale nr.1 (08), Anul V/2020, p. 20.

[13] Gheorghe Boaru, Iulian Marius Iorga, *Securitatea sistemelor informaționale militare*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I", București, 2018, p. 6.

[14] Gheorghe BOARU, Benedictos IORGA, *IMPLICAȚIILE PARTICIPĂRII FORȚELOR MILITARE ROMÂNEȘTI LA OPERAȚIILE DE TIP COALIȚIE, ASUPRA EVOLUȚIEI ȘI*

In the event of these security breaches being created, criminal hackers and underground networks can exploit this situation to take advantage of vulnerable targets and their infrastructure systems. During this period *"coronavirus scams"* are on the rise. These include actions by many of the same professional cybersecurity scammers who have been seen before. They may seem new, but they are actually the same. The main difference is that they are *"crowned"*[15].

Due to this *"storm"* generated by Coronavirus we can become a target. Maybe we have a lot of valuable things in the information that hackers are looking for. We have to protect them! Protect them by looking for ways to strengthen their security. At the institutional level *"the global and multidimensional nature of the issue of information security, with the recognition of the need for security governance to be developed to combat the cyber threat and that, in this action, many more levels, actors, institutions and people involved in the cyber ecosystem must be committed"*[16].

The area that ensures the peace and protection of *"Honest Internet users"* from the destructive actions of cyber terrorists is **Cybersecurity**. In a recently published paper[17], the author makes 33 practical recommendations for Internet online *"home work"* or *"telework"* users. The types of villains (*Hackers[18], crackers, cyber hooligans (Cyberbullies)...*) and/or their actions

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DEZVOLTĂRII SISTEMULUI MILITAR NAȚIONAL DE COMUNICAȚII ȘI INFORMATIC, Editura SITECH, Craiova, 2020, p. 236.

[15] Col. (ret.) Professor Gheorghe BOARU, PhD, *PANDEMIA DE CORONAVIRUS ȘI SECURITATEA CIBERNETICĂ,* Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale nr.1 (08), Anul V/2020, p.21.

[16] Col. (ret.) Professor Gheorghe BOARU, PhD, *Securitatea cibernetică în Uniunea Europeană*, Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale, nr. 2/2017, p. 68.

[17] Col. (ret.) Professor Gheorghe BOARU, PhD, *PANDEMIA DE CORONAVIRUS ȘI SECURITATEA CIBERNETICĂ,* Revista Academiei de Științe ale Securității Naționale nr.1 (08), Anul V/2020, pp. 24-38.

[18] Moreover, by its very definition, the concept of Hacker means, ... *a computer expert, who deals with the in-depth study of software (operating systems, applications), often using reverse engineering techniques (disassembly), in order to obtain knowledge that is not accessible to the general public. Those who use this knowledge for illegal purposes, to compromise the security of computer systems or applications, are in fact Crackers, but in*

(*"coronavirus scams"*, *DeepFakes*, *Theft of Personally Identifiable Information*, *scareware*[19], public Wi-Fi network vulnerabilities, *nondelivery*[20] scams, various types of malware, ...).

For the national security and defense field, according to the assessments of contemporary military specialists, expressed in a specialized paper, *"in addition to the lack of borders, at the level of the new environment of manifestation of human society, other characteristics, such as the anonymity of the actions taken, the legislative gaps and last but not least the possibility of carrying out activities and actions in the permanent virtual environment, from any place, are not conditional on a physical presence or the availability of major financial and technical resources"*[21].

Another interesting approach is presented in a recently published paper[22] examining the question of the functioning of terrorism that terrorism can be effective in achieving tactical returns, but is largely ineffective in achieving strategic objectives. The role of the media is very important both tactically and strategically in view of the internationalization of news.

Most of the time, a certain micro-social effect translates to a higher level in a completely different way. In other words, what produces a positive effect for an individual or group can produce another effect (positive or negative) on another individual, group, or on the rest of society. The crux of terrorism is to cause terror, sometimes achieving a political objective, and sometimes something unexpected. The target of the terrorists is not the people they kill or their number, but collateral damage. Blowing up planes, trains, buses, etc. is not a goal, but a tactics to achieve the real targets – namely, people terrorized. **The real objective of terrorism is not**

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the public perception (usually formed by the media) the notions of hacker and cracker are often confused. [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker], accessed on 15.01 2020.

[19] By definition, scareware, which means fear, scare, or deception, is a type of malware that aims to capitalize on the user's anxiety. Scareware does this by launching a terrifying message that will threaten a user to do something against his interest. The bad one will ask for money in return.

[20] Thanks to this technological dynamic, hackers who have configuration sites will try to lure buyers with goods that do not exist. These are called nondelivery scams (non-distributable).

[21] Gheorghe BOARU, Benedictos IORGA, *op.cit.,* p. 239.

[22] Christophe Paulussen, Martin Scheinin, *Human Dignity And Human Security In Times Of Terrorism,* Publisher: T.M.C. Asser Press/Springer, Year: 2020.

the act itself, but the reaction obtained, the effect, the impact, the cause of terror.

An example of the effect of terror is August 16, 2006, when two people were taken off a plane stopped in Manchester (England), because some passengers found it dangerous to fly with them on board, and that was only because they had an Oriental look, because they spoke Arabic and looked at the clock. Obviously, the two men were released after long inquiries. And such examples are increasingly common in modern society. False alarms of this kind increase our level of fear, waste our time and resources that could be used in a more efficient form, linked to the fight against real threats and safety.

Unfortunately, these fears are also heightened by politicians who visibly heighten this fear and the media who are over-publishing writings about threats of this kind. If there were terrorists captured or killed as a result of an attack and this were publicized, we would certainly witness fewer terrorist phenomena and terrorists would fail.

An assessment of terrorism is required, a rather difficult but not impossible activity. There were already ways of monitoring and analyzing terrorist organizations, networks and actions and assessing the modus operandi and effects. In this evaluation process, system, status and dynamic indicators are used, through which this phenomenon can be monitored and evaluated.

Communications have a very special role in anti-terrorist operations. Therefore, access to information and the maximum use of means of collecting data and information are essential. It has been found that the more developed a society is, the more vulnerable it is to terrorist attacks with a particular psychological impact. Basically, one of the objectives pursued by terrorists is the psychological effect.

Conclusions
The means of mass communication provide terrorism with the *oxygen of the advertising*, without which it cannot exist, for commercial reasons, but also by virtue of freedom of expression and the right of access to information. Although media coverage serves terrorist purposes, its negative effects cannot be ruled out by censorship without seriously

damaging the democratic system. The unique solution, in this case, is journalistic professionalism, social responsibility of the media and cooperation with state authorities to establish effective benchmarks in the management of terrorist crises at the transparent initiative of the latter. Fair legal rules and effective ethical principles, a democratic media system on the public service model and the professionalism of journalists are cumulative and interdependent conditions for the proper treatment of the fundamental problems of society and hence the terrorist problem.

At least as far as security is concerned, globalization will only be functional by establishing a credible and effective authority at international level, and terrorism as a problem will only be eliminated or controlled to the extent that it will wish and require full and responsible treatment of its social-political causes, without losing sight of the cultural peculiarities in which it manifests itself.

War does not appear to be a viable strategy to respond to the terrorist threat. Without minimizing the anti-terrorist component, the governing bodies at the state and especially international level have before them only one alternative to solve this problem, without losing the fundamental values from which they themselves have emanated: the improvement of the means of gathering information in a timely and to the point, combined with bringing the anti-terrorist intervention services to an unbeatable and implicitly dissuasive operational level. The elimination of the social-political causes of asymmetric violent manifestations can result in the abandonment of terrorist practices only to the extent that the legitimate authority is able to demonstrate that those practices have not the slightest chance of success in the sense of improving the situation of those concerned.

Throughout contemporary history many groups have adopted terrorist practices to achieve political goals. The only ones who were successful in achieving these goals, however, were insurgent groups of liberation from colonial rule – the only cases where the motivation of terrorists was stronger than that of state bodies. Theoretically and logically, in order to achieve its geopolitical goals in the Middle East, the United States has tried to make the issue of terrorism in the area a more important cause for itself than for local Americanophobic regimes.

Until September 11, 2001, America was a kind of colonial economic power in the Middle East, and the motivation of terrorists was clearly stronger than that of the US – for some it was a matter of influence, resources and power, and for others it was and still is about existence. In general, an identity cause (national, ethnic, religious) is stronger in motivating the masses than social issues. Therefore, the intensity of violence arising from identity feelings is greater than that generated by socio-economic problems. In order to have a chance of success, the US was virtually forced to shift the problem from the social area to the national one.

As a result, there are **three central variables** which, depending on the intensity of each, can lead to the outline of a **vulnerability** or the manifestation of an imminent **threat** to the social system from the perspective of the chance of success of the mechanisms for managing the terrorist phenomenon.

The first variable is the emergence and consolidation of *militant organizations* that can adhere to terrorism in order to achieve their goals when other paths become inaccessible, either because of the shortcoming of democratic mechanisms (systemic corruption, excessive bureaucracy, increased taxation, poverty, ethnic and racial hatred, distrust of state authority) and ineffective communication between state administration and civil society, or because of extremism, radicalism in mentalities and facts, which certain groups acting within society can demonstrate.

The second variable is represented by *non-controlling and non-professionalized media institutions*, politically and/or economically dependent which can easily be caught up in the trap of different interest groups becoming from their central social responsibility of public service.

The third variable is represented by an *undervalued and powerless state* with institutions ineffective especially in the sphere of law enforcement, public order and national security.

Recent history has shown that the most stable democratic systems can be relatively easily diverted from this by an asymmetric phenomenon, such as terrorism. In Romania there is no direct and imminent terrorist threat, integration into global security structures and continental economic and political structures requiring the elimination of vulnerabilities of the kind outlined above.

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Terrorism is currently the main threat to global security and, in the background of information aggression; the most dangerous element, from this point of view is the unilaterality of information that leads to the disruption of the correct perception and representation of facts, resulting in manipulated behavior.

If last century terrorism was subordinated, generally, to insurgent, revolutionary and national liberation movements, today's terrorism is subordinated to religious and ethnic causes. In both cases, however, certain interest groups speculate on these causes by using terrorism as a pretext to achieve goals in ways that bypass international law. This is a side to the little-commented terrorist phenomenon and proves once again that any social phenomenon can be manipulated and hijacked in the service of foreign interests by those of the community as a whole, even an asymmetrical one such as terrorism. Perhaps all the more so because the representative system linked to it is so slippery and vaguely contoured that it can be shaped in accordance with many particular interests. From this point of view, a threat is shaping up to be much less visible and infinitely more difficult to identify and prove than the classic threat of demonstration violence.

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