CONTEMPORARY METHODS, FORMS AND TOOLS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to present the nature and typology of terrorist attacks taking into account the contemporary conditions of the security environment of the European Union. The author describes the leading methods, forms and tools of contemporary terrorist attacks carried out on the territory of the Community countries. He bases on the latest reports and analyses of the leading security institutions, both in the national and regional dimensions. These data are complemented by analyses of selected terrorist attacks, which allow us to draw additional conclusions and generalizations. The article is innovative due to the specific approach to the threat of terrorist attacks, allowing the reader to easily recognize the leading methods of terrorist struggle and examples of their use. The value of the article is its topicality and focus on the subject of the modus operandi of perpetrators. Thanks to that, the content of the text may constitute a real source of knowledge on the nature of contemporary attacks and trends in their evolution. Due to the utilitarian character of the content, the text may be addressed both to scientists and practitioners performing tasks in the area of counterterrorist operations. An additional advantage of the work is the use of a wide spectrum of doctrine in the area under study, which translates into the possibility of getting acquainted with a variety of opinions of experts and scientists. In the article, the reader will also find a summary of selected opinions on the development of the phenomenon of terrorism and terrorist attacks, which can be a source of knowledge when designing future anti-terrorism solutions.
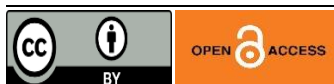
INTRODUCTION

The contemporary security threat environment is characterized by high dynamics of change in terms of threats of a terrorist nature, therefore, the phenomenon of terrorism is one of the most important challenges for the entities of the state security system both from global, regional and national perspectives. As an international threat, it goes beyond the framework of traditionally understood armed conflicts and crises, which

further complicates the preparation of structures to counter this threat (BAKIČ, 2021). Brian Michael Jenkins draws attention to several trends in terrorist activity that may be helpful in the initial recognition of the nature and character of the threat. These include the increased bloodiness of attacks (lethality and brutality), the use by terrorist organisations of new and diversified methods to finance their activities, the adoption of different organisational structures, the ability to conduct terrorist global campaigns and the use of new technologies for communication and propaganda, and the drive to implement tactics to the level of terrorist strategy, although no organisation has succeeded in achieving its long-term (Jenkins, 2006) goals. Terrorism is a phenomenon of political violence subject to constant evolution, which is the result of civilisational development and is the response of terrorists to the changing environment of international and national counter-terrorism efforts.

Currently, the fight against terrorism takes place on at least two levels. The first is related to countering the threat and involves multi-faceted activity by states and international structures. These activities include countering radicalisation, prohibiting and penalising travel to conflict zones and joining terrorist groups, sharing information nationally and internationally, increasing the security of the European Union's external borders and countering online (Archick – Martin, 2021, p. 253) terrorism propaganda. The second area of the fight against terrorism is counter-terrorist activities, which cover the successive phases of counter-terrorist activities such as prevention, preparation, response and recovery (Stelmach, 2016, p.464).

For the activity related to minimizing the effects of terrorist activity to be effective, it should be adapted to the nature and character of the attacks carried out. This article aims to describe the nature and typology of terrorist attacks, taking into account the contemporary conditions of the security environment in the European Union. In the author's opinion, this will allow for a better understanding of the essence of the key features of terrorist attacks and may translate into a more effective design of anti-terrorist solutions.

Combined research approaches were used in the preparation of this article. Desk research ad case studies were used to investigate the issue. The use of triangulation of research methods provided an opportunity to learn more fully about the issue under investigation and to eliminate potential cognitive errors (Bodziany, 2016, p.308). The synergistic use of the study of statistical documents, literature on the nature of terrorist attacks in Europe and the application of detailed exploration of selected cases made it possible to inductively develop reliable and true generalizations. The conclusions identified in this way became the basis for creating deduction theories and laws on the nature of terrorist attacks.

1. EVOLUTION OF METHODS AND TOOLS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

In recent years, a reduction in terrorist activity associated with terrorist attacks has been observed in the European Union (TE-SAT reports, 2022). In particular, the number of fatalities and injuries in subsequent attacks has fallen. This situation has certainly been influenced by the increasing effectiveness of the special services at the stage of identifying terrorist activity, a reduction in the activity of perpetrators due to the Covid-19 pandemic and an increase in the number of people arrested who preparing attacks.

Table 1. Leading methods, targets and consequences of terrorist attacks between 2016 and 2020 (TE-SAT reports 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Year	Number of attacks (completed, failed and foiled)	Number of fatalities and injuries	Leading methods of terrorist attacks	Places of attacks
2016	142	142/379	This year, a significant proportion of attacks have been carried out using explosives. There was also the mass murder method using firearms, knives and machetes. The bloodiest terrorist attack was carried out with a vehicle (Nice).	Places of interest: police station, airport, metro station, shopping centre, pedestrian zone.
2017	205	68/844	Mass murder by firearms is about 41% of all methods, plus the use of a knife or car. Use of explosive - downward trend - to 30%. Perpetrators mainly act alone.	Places of interest: supermarket, pedestrian zone, railway station.
2018	129	13/46	Mass murder by firearm, knife or car, arson, planting an explosive device - TV station, one hostage situation. Attempts to acquire CBRN agents to carry out attacks were identified - thwarted.	Public spaces: headquarters of the TV station, streets, and public spaces of the Christmas market.
2019	119	10/27	Mass murder by firearm, knife or car, arson, planting an explosive device - this method was most often thwarted or failed. Most often perpetrators act alone.	Public places: restaurants, streets, public spaces and public administration buildings (Paris prefecture attack)
2020	57	21/54	Mass murder by firearm, knife or car, arson, planting an explosive device - this method was most often thwarted or failed. Most often perpetrators act alone.	Public spaces: restaurants, streets, public areas

Source: Own elaboration.

Both statistical snapshots and more detailed cases (Maresova – Kucastudies, 2015) indicate the leading methods and tools of attacks in correlation with the places where they are carried out. The observed trends are not accidental and result from the evolution and strengthening of anti-terrorist systems in European states. Among other things, due to the increasingly strong structures and powers of the special services in individual states, together with their effective international (European Council, 2022) cooperation, the possibilities of preventing attacks organised by complex personal structures have increased. The monitoring of radical and extremist circles has yielded some results by eliminating some terrorist activity at the preparatory stage of attacks (Europolreports, 2022). In a significant number of cases, the services are more effective against perpetrators who make attempts to communicate and prepare attacks by obtaining materials to carry them out. Any activity by members of such an organisation is vulnerable to detection and increases the risk of failure. Terrorist groups perfectly understand the mechanisms of the operational work of the services and adapt dynamically to the increasingly difficult conditions of conducting clandestine conspiracy activities. In an asymmetric conflict, terrorists look for weaknesses in the opponent and opportunities to attack an organised and orderly state or a specific community (Caforio, 2013, p.53-67). Hence the increasing number of attacks carried out by single perpetrators, operating with methods and tools available to the public (knives, machetes, crossbows, vehicles, etc.).

2. NATURE AND TYPOLOGY OF METHODS, FORMS AND TOOLS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY

The issue of methods of terrorist activity extends far beyond the field of carrying out the attacks mentioned above and therefore requires detailed analysis and discussion. Method, or manner, is a word of Latin origin and means a deliberate way of acting, the application of which is to lead to the achievement of the desired goal (Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego, 2006, p. 616). Methods of action of members of terrorist organisations consist in choosing such methods of terrorist activity which will correspond with the objectives of criminal groups and ensure maximum media coverage. As the demand for sensation and excitement in communities grows, a new trend in the choice of modus operandi by terrorists is evident each year. It is a particularly worrying phenomenon that the perpetrators are constantly looking for methods to ensure a greater number of victims, and the modern tools they use to fulfil this task perfectly.

K. Jałoszyński (2008, p. 28) lists several methods of terrorist attacks most commonly used by terrorists and these are:

- attacks using combative means;
- bombings;
- hijacking of aircraft or other means of passenger or goods transport;
- hostage-taking;

- attempts on the life of a specific person/persons;
- sabotage;
- assaults using non-conventional weapons - classified as WMD;
- assassinations using remote-controlled models;
- electronic attacks;
- attacks using previously hijacked aircraft;
- robberies.

T. Białek, on the other hand, considers methods as ways of controlling people through various types of pressure and lists four classical terrorist methods:

- persuasion (to persuade, to convince and to raise awareness);
- manipulation (confusion, deception, embarrassment);
- coercion (forcing a person to act by the will of the perpetrator using physical, economic or psychological force);
- violence (destructive use of force, mutilation).

The above are not only methods for carrying out a terrorist attack but are also ways of carrying out terrorist activities in the broadest sense. Terrorists use them very differently, depending on the technological development, availability of new types of weapons and limitations resulting from the imagination of those planning the attack. Terror, on the other hand, according to T. Białek, is a specific "meta-method", which is a result of the interweaving of pure, above-mentioned ways of influence, and its distinguishing feature is aiming at intimidating and paralysing the will of the addressees to fight, by combining elements of deception, violence and coercion (Białek, 2005, p. 21-23).

Henry Prunckun and Troy Whitford regard terrorism as a method of warfare based on the ability to create disproportionate fear - terror - in opponents, thereby overpowering them and increasing their vulnerability to social or political change. Terrorism aims to cause selected groups or even masses of society to turn away from those in power. Through fear, terrorists hope to create a process of disorientation that will lead to the undermining of the social structure. Fear is intended to lead to a situation in which society loses confidence in its elected leaders. Terrorism aims to replace the independence of society, with uncertainty and mistrust. If the law enforcement agencies or the armed forces of the targeted state prove incompetent in the fight against terrorists, the terrorists will have achieved their goal. All according to the principle: "Kill one, scare ten thousand". To cope with this complex task, terrorist methods should be varied and maximise the effect of spreading fear, terror and insecurity (Prunckun – Whitford, 2019, pp. 18-19).

The above analyses and positions of researchers allow us to consider that terrorist activity takes place in two areas. One of them concerns the influence inside the structure of a terrorist group, ensuring its proper organisation, masked structure, effective planning and financing of subsequent attacks. An example of this is the network

structure of Al - Qaeda, the professional manner in which it prepared the attack on the WTC and the Pentagon in 2001 and the effectiveness of this organisation in confusing the fighting forces of the anti-terrorist coalition. Terrorist organisations have developed their standards and procedures for directing and planning their activities along the lines of civilian or military structures. In addition, terrorists use systems for training their cadres - future leaders and soldiers who carry out successive ordered attacks. Thus, it can be said that this activity inside the organisation is specific to terrorists and is characterised by specific methods to ensure the effective realisation of their goals.

The second area of terrorist activity is the external impact on a selected or random opponent. In this area, two methods of activity can be distinguished: carrying out attacks and conducting propaganda and fear-inducing activity. Taking into account the historical conditions associated with terrorist activity and the achievements of the doctrine of security sciences, the author proposes the following division of methods used by terrorists:

- methods of internal influence of the terrorist organisation:
  - indoctrination;
  - planning and organising terrorist activities;
  - financing of terrorist activities;
  - training activities;

- methods of external influence of the terrorist organisation:
  - carrying out terrorist attacks, among them:

• attacks using white weapons or other dangerous tools;
  - attacks with firearms;
  - bombings;
  - hijacking of aircraft or other means of passenger or goods transport;
  - hostage-taking;
  - attacks on the life and freedom of a specific person/persons;
  - sabotage;
  - assassinations using non-conventional weapons - classified as WMD;
  - assassinations using remote-controlled models;
  - electronic attacks;
  - attacks using previously hijacked aircraft;
  - robberies;
  - threats of a specific act or failure to act that could result in loss of life, injury or damage to property;
  - mixed assaults, including comprehensively organised sequential and simultaneous assaults;

• conducting propaganda and fear-mongering activities:
  - poster campaigns;
  - press releases and short-form publications;

- television and radio broadcasts;
- Internet transmissions;
- personal transfers;
- public speeches, proclamations and appeals;
- carrying out charitable and community-oriented activities.

Particular attention should be paid to the methods used to influence organisations externally in the form of terrorist attacks. Terrorist attacks are defined as extraordinary events, deliberately provoked to create panic, chaos and a public sense of insecurity, through which terrorist groups seek to force their objectives (Zamiar – Wełyczko, 2012, p. 37) to be met.

Terrorist attacks can take many different forms and are the result of the perpetrators using specific methods, forms and tools of criminal activity. They may be sudden (bombings, attacks using firearms, attempts on a person's life) or they may continue over time, usually generating additional consequences (hostage-taking, hijacking of aircraft, attacks using a previously hijacked aircraft).

Zenon Zamiar (2012, p. 37) considers that a terrorist attack is an extraordinary event caused deliberately to create panic, chaos and a public feeling of insecurity, through which the perpetrators wish to enforce their demands.

Due to the development of civilisation and the changing face of terrorism, the catalogue of methods used by perpetrators of attacks is very diverse and is not a closed set. In addition, each of these methods used by the perpetrators comes in many forms, i.e. the external, organisational side of the planned and executed attack. This, in turn, is the result of the technical, tactical and other possibilities available to terrorists (Jałoszyński, 2011, p.28).

The last element related to the methods and forms of carrying out attacks is the tool used by the perpetrators. A tool is defined as a simple or complex device enabling some action or work to be carried out, in other words, an instrument (Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego, 2006, p. 839). In the case of methods for carrying out terrorist attacks, this definition must be extended from the concept of the device to include the categories of human beings and animals. Suicide attacks are an example of a terrorist act, where the method will be a bomb attack, the form will be a suicide attack, and the tools for carrying out the attack will be an explosive and a human being. Other tools used by terrorists include white and firearms, flammable agents, and weapons of mass destruction, including the chemical weapon sarin used by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Tokyo in 1995, and biological weapons such as anthrax germs used in the USA in 2001.

Terrorist methods are not the sole determinant of terrorist activity. However, it is precisely on this ground that various manifestations of violence are often mistakenly qualified as a terrorist, simply because of the use of one of the methods most commonly employed by terrorists. The use of explosives by perpetrators in the commission of

crimes will not always be terrorism. It may be, for example, an act of criminal terror or the act of an insane person. If this modus operandi is found, it must be verified whether the other necessary conditions are met for the act to qualify as an act of terrorism.

3. TERRORISM AND TERRORIST ATTACKS – TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT

To understand the nature of terrorism, it is most convenient to use the concept of indirect (Stelmach, 2017, p. 77-81) strategy, which is an indispensable element of the phenomenon and can be the starting point for scientific reflection in this area. This element of the phenomenon is inextricably linked to it and, most importantly, is permanently preserved while the methods, forms and techniques of terrorist attacks continue to evolve. The aforementioned bombing of a shopping centre or attack with a chemical agent in a terrorist strategy is only an indirect target for the perpetrators. The carefully chosen method of carrying out the attack serves to inflict presumed physical damage on the opponent, but this is not the end of the objectives to be achieved by a specific act of terrorism. This use of force is an indirect or instrumental objective of the perpetrators and is intended to lead to the realisation of the main (primary) objective, in the form of forcing the desired behaviour from the terrorists' perspective. In achieving this ultimate goal, the media play an enormous role, being able to maximise the final effect by broadcasting globally and reaching the largest possible target group with appropriate images. Given the complexity of the terrorist act, a certain interdependence between the objectives invoked becomes apparent. The proper planning and selection of the indirect target is a guarantee that it will be attractive from the perspective of media coverage and will ensure that the direct, or primary, target is achieved to the maximum extent (Liedel – Piasecka, 2008, pp. 23-25) possible. Such use of an indirect objective is called an indirect strategy and ensures that the perpetrators of subsequent attacks consistently realise the established primary objective (Ram, 2008, pp. 71-89).

With the development of civilisation in the world, terrorism has also changed its face. The specific evolution of the phenomenon can be seen in the ideological, media

and technical. With the successive waves of terrorism (Kaplan, 2022) and the changing socio-political background of attacks, the methods of carrying out attacks have changed. The first wave of terrorism represented by anarchist terrorism was dominated by spectacular attacks on selected targets and individuals. The perpetrators used various types of weapons to kill influential political figures and thus change the course of historical events. The spread of terrorist ideology was aided in this case by all written sources. The second wave of terrorism was linked to the anti-colonial current and resulted in attacks bordering on urban riots, violence and attacks on selected national groups by organised armed units. It was also terrorism directed at persons of particular importance from the perspective of political life. The media tools used by the perpetrators were joined by radio broadcasting, which guaranteed an increasing range of

promotion of criminal activities. The third wave of terrorism, which began in the 1960s and continued for the next twenty years, was characterised by leftist ideology. The most common methods used by the perpetrators of those times included the use of explosives, blackmail, hostage situations and the start of airborne terrorism. The perpetrators had already made effective use of television to spread their ideas and sow fear on an international scale. This wave of terrorism has led to the creation of counter-terrorist units and the development of a negotiating option to complement possible actions at the scene of terrorist (Briggs, 2011) events. The fourth wave of terrorism is linked to religious radicalism, particularly Islamic radicalism. At this time, suicide terrorism is triumphing, giving a special dimension to the terrorist attack - a mission in the spiritual dimension, being at the same time a perfect form of execution of the attack, with protective barriers still being perfected by the services. It is still the use of explosives as the basic tool of the attack and the building of tension during prolonged hostage situations in public buildings or means of transport (Europol, 2022). Today's perpetrators are using the latest in media propaganda - the Internet - to promote terrorism and enjoy unlimited opportunities to communicate and create fear on a global (Borowski – Wiśniewski, p. 214, Piekarski, 2022) scale.

J. Destein believes that the world today is already operating in the era of the fifth wave of terrorism, which he calls the terrorism of revenge radicalism. Revenge is, at its very core, a form of "Targeted Violence," which can be used to carry out an attack anywhere, anytime, and at the hands of anyone. Schools, Houses of Worship, Public Spaces, etc., are now environments that experience acts of targeted violence and revenge terrorism. While most school shootings are not necessarily considered acts of terrorism, these acts of violence are targeted for revenge against someone or some group. Because revenge terrorism does not have to be affiliated with a specific terror group, it can extend to the individual level for any number of reasons. Thus, whether revenge is driven by bullying, jealousy, perceived injustice, greed, or any other reason, it has become so pervasive it has become a new historical wave that is likely to remain a predominant form of terrorist warfare for the next few decades (Destein, pp. 22-26).

In the context of the changing nature of terrorism, it is worth quoting here the most important theses from the results of a study by Meagan L. Smith and Sean M. Zeigler published on the RAND Corporation website, which refutes the commonly held media opinion that the attack of 11 September 2001 was a turning point or a critical point in the evolution of terrorism in the world. Well, the authors of the study found that, firstly, the number of terrorist attacks did not increase after the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon (they even decreased) and there was a clear shift towards an increase in terrorist attacks in predominantly Muslim countries. Of course, these conclusions find their justification in the general geopolitical situation in the world and require a detailed study of the cited results of scientific (Smith – Zeigler, 2017) investigations.

The UK's latest counter-terrorism strategy identifies three main factors influencing the changing security environment in terms of the threat of terrorism. These are first and foremost the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, which are nowadays a huge challenge politically and socially. The second area implying an increased terrorist risk is the instability of state structures in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. The last key factor is technological development. This favours the use of new technologies by perpetrators, thus creating real problems for states and international communities.

In turn, Atilla Kasznar draws attention to the challenges facing the international community in preparing for modern tools of terrorist attacks. He includes the possibility of the perpetrators using weapons or biological, chemical and radiological agents. It points to the real threat posed by drones, which can be used as platforms to carry explosive devices into protected areas of critical infrastructure facilities or during mass events It stresses the importance of cyberspace as an environment conducive to radicalisation and terrorist propaganda, but also recalls the nature of the threats posed by possible cyber-attack (Kasznár, 2018, pp. 147-148) scenarios.

The analyses presented above show that as the face of terrorism has changed in successive waves, the perpetrators' methods have evolved. As the protection systems of modern states have expanded, the effectiveness of special forces in preventing attacks has increased and the impact of special forces in potential hostage situations has increased, perpetrators have re-evaluated their methods of carrying out attacks. They have begun to build network structures or operate alone at the stage of preparing attacks - to minimise the risk of being discovered by special services. To keep the media coverage attractive, they began to attack more and more spectacularly. The aircraft turned from a target to a tool, and the icon of democracy and economic development disappeared forever from the image of modern New York. Children, who had hitherto been a mere incidental target, became a tool for a terrorist objective at its most gruesome with terrifying premeditation. Modern cities have become fields of almost regular battles, and the perpetrators, realising the professionalism of the special forces, are increasingly using the form of an active shooter to kill as many people as possible before the arrival of the regular anti-terrorist subdivisions.

Despite the increasing proportion of terrorist attacks involving single perpetrators (TE-SAT, 2022), one cannot exclude the possibility of preparing and carrying out an organised attack involving several perpetrators, multiple locations and a variety of tools. What is more, the key factor in such cases is very often the time factor, which can be a determinant of the execution of an attack in the simultaneous formula (several attacks in different places at the same time) or in the sequential formula (several attacks immediately following one another). Such deliberate time management by the perpetrators increases momentum and chaos and disorganises the response of the first on the scene. Kathleen Deloughery points out that organising simultaneous attacks from

the perpetrators' perspective guarantees them more victims, and greater spectacularity and thus translates into greater appeal from a media (Deloughery, 2013, pp. 79-89) perspective. Thus, attacks organised in the formula of several smaller attacks are more likely to ensure the success of a terrorist organisation. From the terrorists' perspective, success is most often understood as the achievement of long-term effects in the form of lasting fear and terror in society and susceptibility to change in the area of the terrorist organisation's objectives.

Homeland Security USA draws attention to the category of "comprehensively organised attacks", pointing out several important features in its report. These are specific techniques, tactics and procedures implemented by those preparing such attacks (Homeland Security US, 2018):

- Use pre-attack surveillance and reconnaissance to gather intelligence for tactical planning and execution;

- Use small teams of well-armed, well-trained individuals employing military or law enforcement style tactics;

- Select soft targets or other vulnerable environments to maximise casualties;

- Strike multiple targets simultaneously or in close succession;

- Strike quickly and move to another location before law enforcement can interdict and disrupt;

- Employ assault weapons, explosives, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and/or fire as weapons; may use/incorporate other non-traditional methods, such as vehicle ramming, knife attacks, and dispersing chemical or biological agents.

- Delay or deny exit by victims and entry by public safety by blocking exits and/or chaining/rigging doors with explosives, using tear gas, and/or using fire/smoke to delay law enforcement response efforts and potentially prolong the incident;

- Take hostages to prolong the incident and/or delay law enforcement response efforts;

- Deploy diversions to slow public safety response, consume responder resources, or

- draw/reorient responders toward or away from specific locations;

- Exploit social media and news coverage to maximise shock value, spread misinformation, instil fear, and promote extreme views;

- Communicate effectively across assault teams, targets, and with outside leadership;

- Coordinate attack timing and methods (e.g., firearms, IEDs, Hazardous Materials [HazMat]) with other attackers and parties assisting assault teams;

- Conduct secondary attacks on first responders, evacuation routes, and/or additional sites, such as medical facilities, that are part of the response;

- Adapt and adjust tactics and/or location quickly based on law enforcement and first responder actions;

- Learn from past law enforcement and first responder tactics and prior CCTA incidents.

The above features of contemporary coordinated terrorist attacks should serve to prepare security structures to respond to potential terrorist incidents in the future. Particularly important in this case are the aspects of organising the system of information management, command and communication, coordination of first actions on the scene(s), media management, and elements of providing medical and psychological assistance. All these mentioned areas were real challenges in the actual implementation of European counter-terrorism (Homeland Security Advisory Council, 2016) forces.

Unusual methods of terrorist activity include state-ordered attacks. Such activity is highlighted in the 2020 Europol Report. The European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Law Enforcement Agencies (Europol) highlights the existence of a new form of terrorism, sponsored and carried out by states through special services. In this case, acts of terrorist violence are even carried out to intimidate and eliminate - in opposition to state governments - the diaspora living abroad. The report highlights, inter alia, the murders of persons of Chechen nationality recorded in France, Austria and Germany, and the planned attacks on gatherings of the Iranian minority, whose activities are contrary to the interests of their countries of origin. In this context, the Agency pointed out, among other things, that in 2020, the German Federal Public Prosecutor indicted Russian citizen Vadim K. for the murder of a Georgian citizen of Chechnya in Berlin in August 2019. The indictment stated that the crime was committed on behalf of government institutions of the Russian Federation. The perpetrator, to commit the crime, took advantage of the possibility of free and unfettered movement through the Schengen Area. As Europol indicates, for this purpose he travelled from Moscow via Paris to Poland, from where, after leaving his hotel in Warsaw, he travelled to Berlin, where he murdered a Chechen.

Contemporary terrorist attacks make it clear that in many cases the terrorists' only direct objective is to instil fear and to enslave the public with a lasting sense of insecurity and insecurity in both public and personal terms. In recent years, it has become increasingly rare to speak of specific demands by terrorist organisations directed at selected governments or organisations. Examples of terrorist incidents from Paris (2015) and Brussels (2016) make the trump cards of terrorists (Goralnicki – Trimpont, 2017) painfully clear. Hitting soft targets, and using the relationship of time weakens the ability of reactive services to respond. Simultaneity and sequentiality are concepts permanently embedded like modern terrorist attacks. In addition, the use of the media,

including at the level of the ubiquitous Internet, makes the actions of terrorists the character of a carefully directed performance in which panic, terror and violence play the main roles.

SUMMARY

All the features of terrorist methods and tools described in the text prepare the security structures of modern states as a huge challenge in both national and international (Stelmach, 2021, pp. 20-24) dimensions. The dynamics in the changeability of attack methods and the extraordinary ability of terrorist perpetrators to adapt to subsequent anti-terrorist activities make terrorism still a leading and extremely challenging threat, despite the statistically decreasing number of attacks and fatalities and injuries.

The synergistic use of the study of statistical documents, literature on the nature of terrorist attacks in Europe and the application of detailed exploration of selected cases made it possible to inductively develop reliable and true generalizations. The conclusions identified in this way became the basis for creating deduction theories and laws on the nature of terrorist attacks.

The findings developed in the course of the research prove that modern terrorist attacks have a complex nature and that the perpetrators can dynamically and flexibly adapt their attack methods to the changing circumstances of counterterrorism operations. The trends shown indicate a changing proportion of attacks using simple tools to those in which perpetrators use explosive devices or the most advanced technologies. The increase in the number of least complex methods is a natural response of terrorists to the intensified and increasingly effective counter-terrorism efforts of states and is also a practical conclusion of momentous importance for the practical dimension of responding to attacks. Since the number of assaults with simple tools is increasing and are being carried out in the form of mass killings, it is necessary to reduce the time of arrival of the first responders on the scene to begin neutralization efforts as soon as possible. Lessons should be learned from the nature of modern terrorist attacks and taken into account when planning counterterrorism operations in European countries.

Another important feature of modern terrorist attacks is that they are carried out in most cases by single perpetrators. This is a critical feature and a conclusion for special services responsible for preventing terrorist attacks. The lack of cooperation between the perpetrators of attacks at the stage of their preparation reduces the possibility of effective operational work and detection of terrorist activity even before the attacks. On top of that, their use of simple tools like vehicles, knives or machetes does not require any preparatory work. Therefore, it is difficult to detect such activities and identify the intention to carry out an attack. All this affects the unequivocal assessment and forecasting of the reality of the threat of terrorist attacks, which cannot be effectively eliminated from the rhythm of the functioning of modern states. Therefore, it remains to

prepare, taking into account the nature of attacks and the methods and tools used by the perpetrators.

The research undertaken by the author of the publication is also of theoretical value since its general and broad scope can provide a starting point for posing further, more detailed and targeted research hypotheses and for studying the nature of terrorist attacks in a variety of conditions and using different methodologies.

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