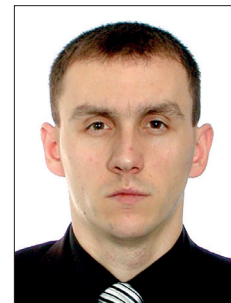




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EARLY DETECTION OF TERRORIST CAMPAIGNS. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE PATTERN AND MAIN CAUSES THEREOF

Terrorism, by its destructive nature, even if it causes a relatively low number of human losses compared to other forms of violent conflicts, contributes significantly to their prolongation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop new approaches to prevent this phenomenon. In the process of describing the concepts of terrorism, this article discusses a model for the early detection of terrorist campaigns, long- and medium-term premises (root and immediate causes), as well as short-term indicators, in order to identify the underlying structures that contribute to the implementation of terrorist campaigns. At almost every stage of their implementation, a transition to the use of other methods of combat is possible.

Keywords: terrorism, terrorist activity, terrorist campaign, national security, violent conflicts, early detection.

DETECTAREA TIMPURIE A CAMPANIILOR TERORISTE. CONSIDERAȚIUNI GENERALE, MODELUL ȘI CAUZELE PRINCIPALE ALE ACESTORA

Terorismul, prin natura sa distructivă, chiar dacă provoacă un număr relativ scăzut de pierderi umane în comparație cu alte forme de conflicte violente, contribuie în mod semnificativ la prelungirea acestora din urmă. Prin urmare, există o nevoie stringentă de dezvoltare a unor noi abordări pentru prevenirea acestui fenomen. În procesul descrierii conceptelor de terorism, acest articol abordează un anumit model pentru detectarea timpurie a campaniilor teroriste, premise pe termen lung și mediu (cauze fundamentale și imediate), precum și indicatori pe termen scurt, în vederea identificării structurilor subiacente care contribuie la implementarea campaniilor teroriste. În aproape fiecare etapă a implementării lor, este posibilă o tranziție la utilizarea altor metode de luptă.

Cuvinte-cheie: terorism, activitate teroristă, campanie teroristă, securitate națională, conflicte violente, detectare timpurie.

Introduction. Taking into account the fact that the world scientific community has not yet reached a general consensus on the concept of terrorism, before starting the analysis of the process of early detection of signs

of terrorist campaigns, it is necessary to consider a number of definitions of this phenomenon [7, p.28].

Depending on the position of the observer and the place of the political debates,

in the absence of a generally accepted definition someone will consider a person a terrorist, while another will define him as a freedom fighter [9, p.10].

Therefore, we consider it easier and more rational to attribute this term to certain acts that cause a feeling of fear (and other similar reactions) in the target category of people, than to refer this notion to groups of people or individuals.

Terrorism and related crimes are a multi-faceted problem that requires multi-dimensional solutions. International experience shows that the respect and protection of human rights and the fundamental principle of the rule of law are not an obstacle, but a *sine qua non* condition for identifying effective responses and reactions against threats to national, regional and international security [4, p.55].

At the same time, political and economic events have sometimes conditioned the merging of terrorism with organized crime, overlapping these two phenomena. There are also a number of clear structural analogies that seem to make their collaboration a mutually beneficial one. Furthermore, we can assume that both types of organizations attract personalities capable of combining both forms of criminal activity [5, p.78].

Conditionally, manifestations of a terrorist nature can be divided into the following categories:

- violent politically motivated attacks by non-state actors on civilian targets;
- actions carried out primarily with the aim of provoking a certain public reaction, as opposed to the tactics of the military or guerrilla groups;
- actions aimed at provoking the opponent to retaliate, which in turn are often used to justify violence.

A terrorist campaign includes all stages - starting with the decision to launch a campaign and ending with the planning, preparation and implementation of a series of attacks and their consequences, which consist in pro-

voking and using a political effect.

This means that for the early detection of this activity it is necessary to monitor the signs of an already launched campaign in order to implement, based on these indications, a short-term prevention strategy.

In other words, it is necessary to establish and monitor the premises for making a decision to start a terrorist campaign. In this sense, it is not enough just to liquidate the consequences of terrorist activity.

The preconditions for terrorist acts often consist of political conflicts, which partly have the same root causes as political terrorism.

Early detection model development task

Feedback mechanisms are acting and reflect predictions that are automatically realized as well as unrealizable ones in planning and preparation. However, sociologists have recently made remarkable progress in some areas of detection and early warning. Models have been developed and are partially applied to predict violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights through genocide, forced migration and failed measures applied by the state apparatus [1].

The notion of “early detection of conflict escalation” was developed by Alex P. Schmid, who defines the term as “the observation and recording of hidden or obscure signs and indicators that point to the escalation of a conflict or the onset of a crisis, that require monitoring (“early observation”) right in the area of potential conflict, systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data, consultations with experts, for further analysis and interpretation [6, p.37].

This definition can also be applied to the early detection of terrorist campaigns. However, in addition to the general problems facing the early warning process, two others arise:

- For organizational, bureaucratic and operational reasons, larger communities are relatively limited in their actions, making

them somewhat rational and predictable. Individual behavior is much less predictable and often appears arbitrary, capricious and irrational. On the grounds, that it is difficult to assess individual behavior, especially when it is subject to external forecasting, it is easier to trace regular processes at a generalized level of collective social behavior and identify trends. In consequence, the forecasting model presented in this article focuses on the collective aspect of terrorist activity, i.e. a terrorist campaign, and does not apply to individual terrorist acts.

➤ Terrorists operate covertly because secrecy helps protect the group and gives it a certain cover. Unlike the intended consequences of the actions of the military and guerilla groups, the effect of surprise, on which terrorists rely, is intended to create a vague but general sense of danger among the population against whom the terrorist act is directed. Due to the conspiratorial nature of terrorist campaigns, there is a certain lack of up-to-date empirical data, and access to it is often limited. Information about the conduct of a terrorist campaign is usually of a limited or retrospective nature, for example in the form of memos or testimony in criminal proceedings.

The model of early detection of terrorist campaigns

Various models can be applied for the purpose of risk assessment and forecasting. For instance, Bruce Newsam [3] and his terrorism-forecasting group use the scientific method of “Delphi” polls in combination with historical extrapolations, and Alex Schmid developed the Terrorism Index, which measures levels of risk. To optimize forecasts, these methods should be applied simultaneously and compared through several methodological approaches.

The conceptual model presented here combines partially validated variables with other inference-based variables. This model distinguishes between the *preconditions and*

characteristics of terrorist campaigns.

Signs are events or phenomena that indicate that a campaign is underway, while *preconditions* are factors that have created a social environment conducive to terrorist campaigns in the past. The latter are in turn divided into the following:

✓ **long-term structural (basic) causes**, which create social and other tensions that, together with other forms of conflict, can give rise to terrorist campaigns;

✓ **medium-term situational causes**, the so-called immediate, which create the risk that one of the participants, prone to violence, will resort to acts of terrorism.

Both types of circumstances are under the influence of facilitating/accelerating and hindering/retarding factors. They usually do not have a causal relationship with campaigns, but they affect it, speeding up or slowing down the process [2].

Not all the necessary information is always available to develop a comprehensive early detection model. Often only one time period applies to some models. As an example we can bring the approach developed by Joshua Sinai, which is based on short-term “indicators and warning” [8].

Unfortunately, many models often overlook factors unrelated to military or security issues.

For a simple visual explanation of the early detection approach, the selection of relevant factors is limited to those with the highest universal value. For certain campaigns, there may be a need to supplement with additional variables related to their overall context.

Fundamental causes: preconditions / premises

History tends to repeat itself if the underlying social structure has not changed. Nevertheless, the mere presence of structural determinants is not enough. In order to launch a terrorist campaign, three factors must match:

a) the willingness of rebels to endure the hardships of life in conspiratorial conditions, being driven to this way of life either by the conditions of their own life, by the life of their family or social group, or by the ideology proclaimed by a charismatic leader;

b) a structure that provides the opportunity to motivate leaders to try their luck in the hope of history changing;

c) the capabilities of the group that are based on human and economic resources created internally or obtained from the outside.

The factor of democracy in the context of motivation and opportunity can play a dual role. On the one hand, democratic countries limit violent methods of conflict, using legal methods to restore justice, and on the other hand, freedom of unification and movement

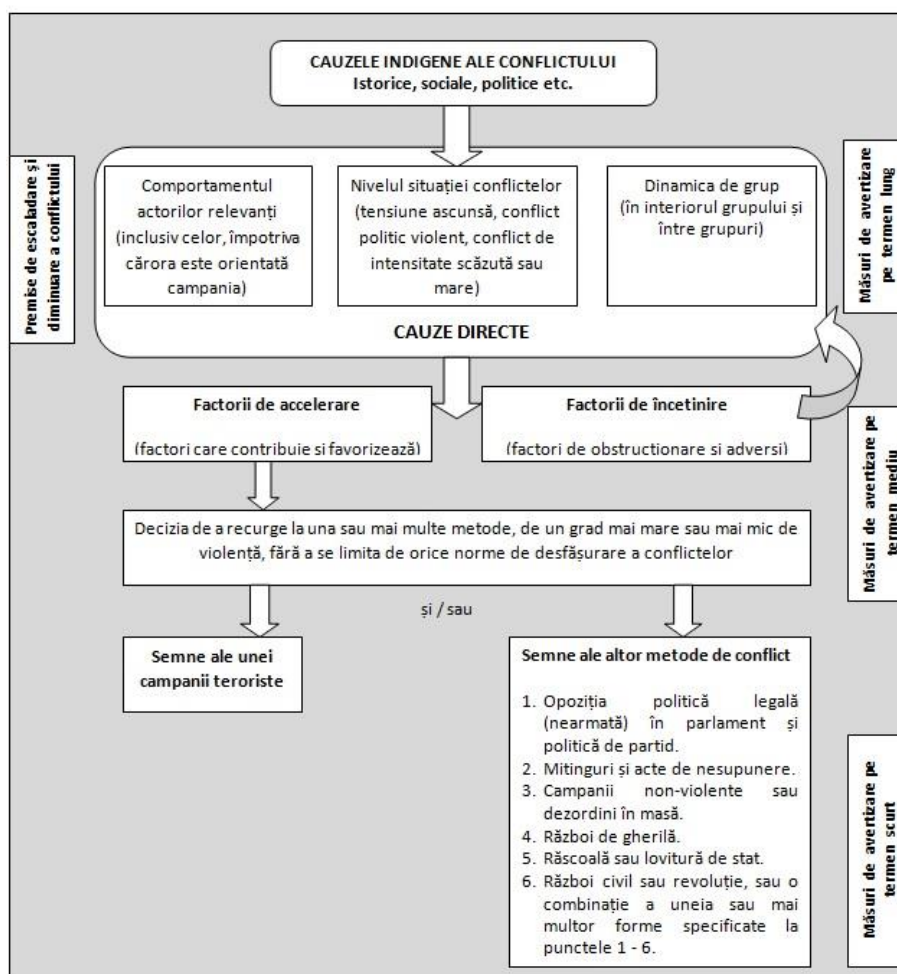
in an open society expands the possibilities for committing terrorist acts.

In this way, researcher Alex P. Schmid developed the outline of a Conceptual Model for Early Detection of Terrorist Campaigns, presented below.

Conclusions. In this paper, we have addressed medium-term proximate causes to link the two parallels with the early detection approach, which are often considered incompatible: long-term indigenous cause analysis and short-term sign analysis. These direct reasons are situational conditions that increase the risk of the emergence of militants of terrorist campaigns.

If we take into account the most obvious characteristic of the terrorists' strategy, namely the great propaganda impact, a special

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importance is attributed to the recipient (the target group) in the decision-making process of the militants. In addition to the emphasis placed on the internal dynamics of the group (and this factor is given special attention in most analytical studies when it comes to the dangers posed by the terrorist group), four conflict situations were briefly presented, in-

dicating the existence of a high degree of probability of carrying out terrorist campaigns:

- decrease in low-intensity conflicts;
- escalation of political conflicts;
- appearance of new participants in the context of an already ongoing conflict;
- development of post-conflict armed situations.

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