

Malgorzata Kudzin-Borkowska

***Response to terrorist attacks. Selected issues,*
Jarosław Stelmach (ed.)¹**

A quarter of century since Publishing Company, Difin has existed and it moves its profile to security area having in its profile already quite a large number of books on theory and administration of security, crisis management, terrorism, cyber security, warfare tactics etc. The reviewed book presents recent research on terrorism related issues and consists of pieces of work of thirteen researchers representing different research centers and different areas of expertise. Twelve chapters contain afterthoughts on the essence of the contemporary terrorism phenomenon. There have been some studies of terrorist attacks from the previous years, there have also been discussed assassins' tactics and the ways of reaction to attacks. Some aspects of crisis management and coordination of antiterrorist activities have been commented on as well as current legal solutions in the field of antiterrorism. A special kind of value of this release is that it contains papers from different cognitive perspectives, since some of the authors use their previous practical experience in their scientific work.

In the *Introduction – deliberations in the shadow of Nice tragedy* the editor of the volume stresses the complexity of current threats, increasing challenges for police and law enforcement and particular importance of people's behaviors during first minutes of terrorist attacks. The editor expresses simultaneously an opinion shared by the majority of European experts that terrorism is a kind of threat that no country can effectively and fully prevent. He states that fight with terrorism should be strengthened by changes in antiterrorist legislation, by further equipment of police forces and special units with advanced and technical tools. The author points out how important alert systems, warning systems and evacuation systems are. It is essential to adjust alerting signals to risk incurred. Correct evacuation and warning procedure can effectively reduce the number of those affected. At this point the author draws also attention to first aid measures, which - because of the nature of terrorist acts - can often remind providing assistance on the battlefield. It is impossible to prepare specialized emergency departments to receive bigger number of wounded at short intervals. Such solutions work during mass events when the risk of threats is increased. The author states that permanent readiness of rescue services is impossible (for example from an economic point of view), what has been observed during attacks in Paris or Nice. Wounded were transported to hospitals by policemen or private individuals.

As the author rightly indicates in the introduction, response to terrorist attacks is based on numerous elements, tasks and entities which are to perform these tasks. It is a *sui generis* scientific area typical for science regarding security. According to

¹ Warsaw 2016, Difin, p. 195.

the author, it is essential that scientific deliberations are carried out by different scientific centers with the active involvement of the institutions performing antiterrorist tasks in practice. The paper is a result of cooperation between experts and scientists and is addressed to those who are interested in the subject. It is a valuable source of knowledge for people interested in minimizing results of terrorist acts, for academics and students.

In Chapter I of the book, *Terrorism – phenomenon of scientific exploration*, its author, Zbigniew Ściborek presents his theoretical and methodological thoughts and describes the overall picture of terrorism in Polish science. Undoubtedly, methodological comments of the author are valuable and possibility of getting to know different views by different scientists on practicing science as well as methodology approach, adopted cognitive approach and theoretical concepts is very important here. Nevertheless, there are also some dubious remarks (p. 17) like for example one that (...) *we do not think about the essence of this most dangerous phenomenon understood in non-military terms* and that (...) *we do not have (...) methods of scientific exploration of the phenomenon developed* and the suggestion that only such centers as Centrum Badań nad Terroryzmem Collegium Civitas or WSiIZ in Rzeszów do research in terrorism phenomenon. The author rightly stresses in conclusions that the topic of terrorism includes more than sciences on security only what makes it necessary to constantly monitor the phenomena around to generate possibly best solutions to minimize possible results of attacks. So, there is a need to unite the scientific work to update and analyze current events and occurrences.

Krzysztof Rokiciński in his excellent text *Terrorism in hybrid conflict* carries out highly reliable analysis of symmetry, asymmetry and hybrid traits in military conflicts. He defines precisely and presents a comprehensive catalogue of analyzed conceptual categories. The author exposes mercilessly fineness of numerous pseudoscientific definitions and concepts promoted sometimes even by respectable institutions. He points out an official NATO web page which gives the following definition (p.31): (...) *an attack (...) carried out through joined special forces, information campaign and mercenaries who enter by the back door*.

Thoughts included in the text do not engender optimism when the author states that more attacks like in Bombay, Paris and Brussels may cause that – in terms of civilization – we can pull back a few centuries, and “the fear always and everywhere” shall be fulfilled on ourselves. And liberal democracies shall be replaced by states of emergency.

According to the author military action can be effective only in the Middle East, in Europe though military forces cannot play any role in eliminating terrorism threats.

The reader may be impressed by an interesting outline of research problems and clarity of consideration, precise and logic narrative as well as an excellent Polish language of the author. The paper can be an example for younger researchers how to write and edit scientific texts.

In the third chapter *Performativity of terrorism. Anthropology of psychological fight*, Robert Borkowski pays attention to terrorism phenomenon which is a subject to research and analysis on the ground of many scientific disciplines including different

scientific and methodological perspectives. The author stresses that not every form of violence can be called terrorism but because of media popularity the term has become popular also in science. According to the author in Polish social sciences there can be distinguished three phases of the study on terrorism. First, up to the year of 2001 – of the pioneer nature, second – as the effect of 9/11 attacks (when the interest in Al Qaeda has increased) and the last one which reflects among others current analysis of situation and events in Europe. As the author notes many most recent studies are imitative, very often in current affairs forms without original conclusions.

In the remainder of the text the author recalls a thought (p. 45): (...) *terrorism as a spectacular show is a kind of performance which is essentially a ritual of human sacrifice, what is motivated by pseudo-religious motives in Sunni jihadism*. He refers to a violence theory in relation with sacrum by Rene Girard, according to whom violence is the foundation of societies, religious ritual is the foundation of each and every culture and aggression (apart from biological, mental and social conditions) is the metaphysical archetype of mankind. According to the author violence can be controlled when it is subordinated to sacrum – when this status is disturbed, the line between justice and revenge, social order and barbarity and cruelty disappears. Omnipresence in the media of the terrorism topic has become an element of pop culture. The author points out that picture of terrorism in modern media is a substitute for threats of the past generations. Instead of stories about wars, battles there are reports from sites of attacks. Sensational news brings a lot of publicity, provides advertisement to terrorists and thriller to recipients of the news. Often the viewers have false sense of identification with victims, even if the attack took place hundreds of kilometers away and stimulated fear causes increased insecurity and which raises concerns for example about travelling. Tragedies shown on TV screen hit with expression and this makes viewers see more than eye witnesses. Perfect video footage together with the speed of transmission gives a sense of proximity of threat. Terrorists do not disappear under pressure from military troops – military strikes can destroy jihadists' centers but they cannot ensure security in Europe.

In the chapter *Genesis, development and danger of Islamic terrorism in the context of mass migration movements* J. Piwowski, A. Czop and P. Pajorski attempted to provide an answer for question about the sources of contemporary Islamist military movements and the reason for their spreading. The authors presented Islamic fundamentalism, IS activity, named a variety of Islamist organizations and military movements. They fairly outlined a history of Al Qaeda quoting correct information on the history of its development. However, in this 18-page chapter only few general sentences were addressed to the topic of refugees with no statistic data on the scale of migration pressure from the Middle East. Quoted classification of difficult situations by Tomaszewski (p. 66) has no connection with the chapter as a whole. The authors use oversimplifications, they do not differentiate between Islam and Islamic fundamentalism or between Sunni doctrines of Wahhabi and Salafi and a Shia concept of religious revolution. The text contains some distortions to which attention should have been paid. It is not true what the authors claim

(p.54) that fundamentalism is a state doctrine in Lebanon nor that it is supported in Syria and Iraq (sic!). War in Syria and Iraq is a conflict between governmental forces of secular republics and fundamentalists from Islamic State. So, the authors are moving around in an authorial and alternative history of the Middle East.

Chapter V by Jarosław Stelmach focuses on *multidimensionality in responding to terrorist incidents*. The author starts with an analysis of an intermediate strategy of terrorists to discussion of provisions concerning the so called terrorist incident. Brief presentation of terrorism evolution is really interesting, both in historical aspect (successive waves of terrorism starting from the anarchic in 19th century ending with the religious in 21st century) as well as changes in methodology of attacks (from politically motivated murders to mass killings). The author draws attention to variety of terrorism forms which is undoubtedly a result of different methods used by terrorists. Forms and tools can be sudden (for example bomb attacks, attacks involving firearms) but also can be continued for some time (for example hijacking a plane, taking hostages) what generates very often additional results. It may also happen that terrorists do not make any demands and all their actions are divided into smaller phases to achieve one primary objective later on. Then, gradual intimidation causes sense of danger and in the long term it brings expected result.

Last part of the chapter is devoted to effective response to current terrorist attacks. Highly moving is a constation of David Fromkin of 1975 quoted by the author that terrorists' objective does not have to be the sowing of fear and terror, fighting with police forces or physical devastation but pure desire to destruct our cultural and political values. But the point is that in order to protect ourselves we should forgo our liberties, freedoms and democracy destroying at the same time our social and political order. Could possibly Islamic State strategists think that (...) *we do not have democracy in the Middle East so in the near future you will not have it in Europe as well?*

Albert Karolewski in his text *Active shooter – one of the methods used by terrorists* deals with a very important and current issue analyzing attacks from Norway, Tunisia or France and shootings in the USA over recent years. This term used by American services and institutions is not fortunate. In Polish penal law and native criminology there is this concept of mass casualties and in the descriptive sense of the crime we use shooting or massacre. Meanwhile, in the literature of science regarding security there are plenty of Americanisms like mass shooting, school shooting, lonely shooter or active shooter – term used in this piece of paper (notabene might there be a passive shooter?). The text was written competently and interestingly for readers. The author analyses attackers' psyche and cases of attacks from the past few years. The text can be used as training material in antiterrorist prevention because it contains valuable guidelines how to survive and, depending on the situation, when to run, when to hide or when to take up the fight.

Andrzej Kozicki prepared a situation analysis after A. Breivik attack in his article *Civilian authorities and terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011. Leadership, cultural assets and the language of political description*. There are two major issues raised in

the article. First, the issue of leadership emerging, possible disputes over competence and organizational culture in view of the crisis situation, which was totally new back then in Norway. Second, the process of shaping political discussions by the authorities after the attack and addressing social anxieties. It seems that Norwegian experience should be valuable for institutions and political elites of those countries which had not been affected by terrorist attacks trauma yet. The topic of impact on modern societies through mass media has also been taken up by Bartosz Maziarz in the chapter called *New media and terrorism. Media image of Paris attacks 2015*. There was an interesting picture of media evolution in 20th and 21st century paying particular attention to the so called new media, social media and their huge reach of power. At the same time he discussed transformation of media strategies used by terrorists starting from 1970s up to the latest attacks in the capital of France.

In Chapter 9, *Terrorist attacks in France in 2016 in special forces reaction*, Kuba Jałoszyński presents an analysis of tactics used by terrorists and subdivisions of the French National Gendarmerie (GIGN) and the Police (RAID). An old pro of the tactics of the fights on an urban ground (scientist, former police Navy Seal, chief of antiterrorist unit in the police) describes events in Paris in such an interesting way that there is no way to get away from the text. The latest terrorist attacks in Paris reflect evolution of methods used by terrorists. A detailed analysis of events allows the author to conclude that another scene of terrorist attacks is expected where the attacks will be carried out so that to unable police forces to react properly.

Last parts of the text are devoted to cooperation of police forces of the EU Member States (including the role of ATLAS) and legal regulations in this area. The author stresses the changes in procedures of special forces – previously emphasis was placed on negotiations with terrorists, kidnappers etc. Currently the priority is to ensure security for victims by eliminating threat. In some European countries such procedural changes are introduced. Policemen undergo a 15 week training to prepare for the new tactics.

Justyna Trubalska addressed the topic of crisis management during terrorist attacks. She presented in the text *The process of crisis management in countering and fighting terrorist incidents* a good overview of crisis reaction and management procedures in Poland. In the chapter *Cooperation and coordination of services' actions as fields of activities enabling effective counteracting and fighting asymmetric threats* Jarosław Cymerski considers to what extent it is probable that contemporary threats in Europe (terrorism, hybrid and asymmetric conflicts) can happen in Poland. The author treats with caution today's vogue for terminology and submits nature of the most probable threats for reliable and critical analysis. In the second part of the chapter he presents a structure and functionality of counterterrorism system in Poland, inter alia, he pays particular attention to chosen institutions and entities playing role of experts and analysts.

In Chapter 12, *Responding to terrorist attacks in the Republic of Poland according to provisions of antiterrorist act*, Jarosław Stelmach considers legal framework of crisis reaction in Poland. The text consists of characteristics of antiterrorist system

in Poland before the antiterrorist act had been introduced, description of premises of antiterrorist law and deliberating on the possible improvements of the state security. In addition, scientists and experts research on the constantly changing reality (although a huge challenge) can be a significant contribution to improving antiterrorist system. The author draws attention to how important training, exercises and simulations in professional development are.

In *Conclusion* of the book the editor writes about perspectives and tendencies in antiterrorist solutions in view of the present terrorist threats. He emphasizes significance of the three areas of counteracting threats: changes in antiterrorist legislation, enhancing security of public facilities and venues and antiterrorist education of the society. Additionally, there are biographical information on the authors in this small by volume but successful and worthy of recommendation study not only to those who deal with the practical aspects of the topic as well as to students of security connected faculties and researchers of the terrorism phenomenon.