

**Tendencje rozwoju współczesnego ekstremizmu  
terrorystycznego – analiza wybranych zamachów.  
(Trends in the development of modern terrorist extremism  
- analysis of selected attacks)**



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The word "extremism" itself (Latin *extremus* – marginal) – shall be understood as applauding extreme opinions, using utter means to achieve a political, economic or ideological goal. In the ultimate forms of the followers', or in other words, extremists' acts, the use of extreme forms of pressure, like violence or terror, is not excluded. The method of logical analysis of events and the comparative method of fact analysis have been used to examine the researched issues, areas and problems. The presentation and analysis of the research topic were based on source materials, literature, and facts presented on the Internet. Selected topics were analysed: fundamentals of Islam, sections and currents,

changes in terrorist activities and trends in the growth of terrorist extremism. The analysis of the gathered material shows that terrorist activity is subject to continuous development in terms of its structure, the strategy of attacks, the technology used and the moral approach to inflicting pain or dissenters' death.

**Key words:** *Event analysis, Islam, threat, terrorism, fight, security, attack, extremism.*

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Over the last decade of the twenty-first century a number of people in Poland have started to worry about a significant increase in radical Islam. However, the local feeling of threat in comparison with what is happening in the West, as is apparent from the studies of an independent American institute, the Pew Research Center, is incomparable – there it has increased three times. Since the second half of the 20th century the European society has started to grow aware of the dangers posed to it by Islamic extremism. Islam is talked and written about more often than other religions. Attention is focused mainly on Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. The media inform their recipients about *the Islamic call*, which is addressed to the entire world. Many experts believe that attacks carried out by Islamic extremists are and will be the main threat of the 21st century. The aim of the article is to refresh the memory of how extremism evolved in the twenty-first century and what shape it has been taking. You can outline a hypothesis that on the part of extremists the desire of making an impact

and causing destruction will take various forms, and over the recent decades real facts and atrocities have exceeded even those contained in films and literature.

### **The analysis of selected areas of the growth of extremism**

After a careful analysis of the facts of the past two decades, it can be concluded that the development of such processes as globalisation and regionalisation strengthens the role of religion in international relations, as well as in the social and historical development of humanity. The presence of the religious factor may be discovered in a number of historical processes, and it can be stated that it takes a variety of forms. As reported by the press, in South America terrifying and cruel hit squads (guerrillas) have been active for decades. None of them, however – even the most anti-American militant groups from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, or Colombia – has attacked the subway in New York, like the extremists do, or has ever tried to cause such damage as the World Trade Center attack. The question is: what is the difference between them, what is the extremist way of thinking, if there is any at all, how much hatred is there for everyone including their own peers since extremists do not spare even the followers. The point is that the sense of rejection in the case of the aforementioned militant groups never went a step further. In the case of extremism, which is the subject of this paper, the issues we have to handle are not only personal. The problem of Islamic extremism is much deeper, we need to write about it, analyse it and talk about it, because we have to deal with the clash of civilizations, it is a clash with the environment, which does not want to accept the surrounding situation.

"We are at war with Islamic extremism", wrote in his article Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. This is not a statement of an "islamophobe" but of a man who used to be the leader of the British government. Blair's argument is simple: we are fighting with a specific ideology rather than "aggressive extremism", whose supporters can be "deradicalised". This ideology is Islamism. Islamism leads to extremist Islamism and then to acts of violence. There are not thousands but millions of supporters of this ideology. This is not the

entire Islam, as Blair stresses clearly, only its radical representatives. This ideology is not interested in coexistence with us, our civilization and discourse, but our subordination. "You cannot limit it, you have to overcome it", says or writes Blair. The objective needs to be set as to test whether we will take up the fight against Islamism and extremism. It seems to be the question to which there is only one answer: Yes, we will. However, immediately another question is raised: how can one fight with what is in an individual's mind. "Terrorism is merely a tactic. There is an ongoing fight against radical, utopian ideology and those who speak on its behalf make use of violence". This is not a quotation from Blair, even though it sounds almost identical. It is an excerpt from an article "A war with whom?", written by Jonathan Schanzer, published fifteen years ago. The fact that many years later Tony Blair says the same thing, and that it still is not a matter-of-course - shows how much the political elite do not want to acknowledge reality.

Therefore, there is a fear that Europe will continue the fight with terrorists, rather than Islamism, allowing it to grow in strength. As long, writes Blair, as it "does not commit an act on an enormous scale and so terrible that we will change our attitude," [1]. It will be those who choose not to notice the total ideology of Islamism that will be responsible both for this act and for all that will come before it. But not only them - also all those who will stand and watch passively what is going on around us, at the same time allowing for the extreme acts of all factions and groups that favour violence [2].

Referring to the statistics and the development of extremism, the Pew Research Center report leaves no illusions, the main factor in the growth of Muslim population in Europe is immigration. If we assume an unrealistic option, considering the policies of European countries, of zero-migration, the population of Muslims in Europe will grow by about ten million, which will be an increase from the current 4.9% to 7.4%. However, if we look at the option of high immigration, their population will increase from about twenty six million estimated last year, i.e. 2016, to almost seventy-six million in 2050. However, given the uneven distribution of the population in each country, Germany will have approximately seventeen million Muslims

(about 20%), whereas the United Kingdom and France over thirteen million, which will be 17-18% of the population. Sweden will have the largest percentage of the Muslim community - approximately 30%. In Poland, even with the scenario of high immigration, taking into account the current attitude of the society, the Muslim minority will not exceed 0.2% [3].

Analyses show that what can be considered a particularly important threat to Europe and the rest of the world is radical Muslim fundamentalism and extremism, which in turn transform into terrorism. In the light of the events that take place around the world, it can be stated that what poses a real threat to the security of European society is international extremism, terrorism and consequently, organized crime and drug trafficking. Extremist terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, no matter what it is motivated by is unacceptable and it is necessary to look for ways and means to prevent the financing and preparation of any terrorist attacks within the territory of civilized states.

Regardless of the fact that the weight, kind and type of the threat are known, it is necessary to identify research problems, answers to which are likely to be found in analyses. Many analysts are wondering what evil may occur caused by extremists? Is there awareness of the real danger, or perhaps only a stereotype created by political games? What are the reasons behind the prevalence of Muslim views? What forms does Islam take? These and other questions are increasingly troubling modern historians, political scientists, geopoliticians and other experts, which is hardly surprising, as Islam is a religion professed by more than one billion people and occupying a territory of about fifty Muslim states. According to subsequent forecasts, by 2050 three out of eight billion people on Earth will be practising Islam.

The history of the second half of the 20th century shows that the Islamic civilization increasingly mobilises against the West, because it is not satisfied with its desire to dominate in the modern world. In view of these facts, there is an obvious need to research all kinds of impact of the Islamic factor on the political and social development as well as the need for the analysis of terrorist activities carried out by extremists.

Among other things, the purpose of this article, as can be seen from the topic, is the analysis of trends in the growth of modern terrorist extremism and the analysis of the attacks selected by the author.

The conclusions of the analysis of the topic and selected activities were the basis for the formulation of problems which require questions for the identification of research areas. The items below should be individually considered, recognized, and an attempt to understand them should be made - not every question posed in the paper, however, can be answered:

- What do the religious and socio-cultural foundations of Islam look like and what factions and trends can be identified in Islam?
- What changes occur in terrorist activity and in what direction and with what measures does the modern extremist terrorism develop?

To talk about contemporary trends in the development of extremism, it is necessary to return to the recent past. In his book, Xavier Raufer presented the division of jihadist fighters generations. At the beginning there were volunteers who came to Afghanistan to lead the fight against the Soviet Union. Statistics show that in the years 1980-1992 around forty thousand volunteers from abroad fought alongside the Mujahideen. Many of them were Muslims who flocked to Afghanistan from Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan and Iraq. When the Soviet Union in 1989 withdrew, over eleven thousand of experienced fighters continued the holy war on other fronts. A large number of them returned to their home countries and formed new movements, which aimed to fight against the governments holding power, which they considered unholy. This concerned such countries as Egypt, Jordan and Algeria. Some of them settled in Pakistan, later creating a real reservoir of international terrorism. Another group of extremists went to Europe and the United States to recruit other members of their organisation and use the "wealth" of the Western world, such as access to mass media, modern technology, easy transition between European countries, setting up associations seamlessly [4, 26].

The modus operandi of extremists' activities can be illustrated by the operation which took place in the 1990s in Afghanistan, where they began training the second

generation of fighters, or in other words "Afghans", because that is the term used to refer to them until 2001. The recruitment of new "soldiers" took place in Africa, Europe, America, and wherever there were willing or interested individuals. These included Canadians, Australians, Americans, Turks, Chinese, Somalis and more. The increase in the number of "conversions", or in other words, fighters joining the militant groups has been influenced by the conquest of Afghanistan by the Taliban in the years 1994-1998. From 1995 to 2000 from eleven to thirty thousand people were trained in those camps, yet the exact number has not been precisely estimated [4, 27]. In the training camps the newly recruited fighters received theoretical and practical knowledge, which concerned the following issues: the use of weapons and explosives, methods of falsifying documents, advice on the amounts offered as bribes for corrupt officials and a variety of other information. After training in Afghanistan, part of the fighters stayed for some time, to fight together with the Taliban, and the remainder went to lead an independent fight, for example, in Chechnya, Indonesia, the Balkans, etc. At the same time new networks of Jihad as well as small cells and terrorist organisations were established in Europe, USA, Africa and Asia. Their members recruited, raised money and were waiting for the opportune moment to start acting.

After the attack, which happened on September 11, 2001, and which was described in detail in a number of literary sources, there was a temporary derangement of fundamentalist cells, but soon it turned up that the third generation of the Jihad fighters appeared. It was trained and determined just like the previous one, yet even more mobile and indestructible like a myth. Most of the members of these groups state that their only and specific goal is Jihad, which will embrace the whole world. [4, 27-28] The war in Iraq played a role of the main factor that powered the recruitment process for a very large number of Jihad and Salafi groups. After several months of a different war, not with the "Saddam's troops" but with militant groups, Iraq became the symbolic epicentre of "the international Jihad", and especially an important reference point for fighters of all generations.

According to some European experts radicalisation was not as powerful as

nowadays. The author fully agrees with the opinion of one of the French counter-terrorism experts, who has commented as follows: "we participate in the mutation of the Jihad networks with new, a lot younger participants, who are sometimes even minors, and therefore more submissive ". In this respect they are "recycled" activists of the fundamentalist organization of Maghreb (Arab Maghreb Union {arab. العربي المغرب اتحاد; Ittihad al-Maghrib al-Araby} – an international organisation, bringing together the Member States of the Maghreb region. It should be remembered that the idea of creating the Union of Arab States in North Africa was established in 1956, along with Morocco and Tunisia obtaining independence, and it was motivated by strong national liberation influences, such as Algerian GIA - an Armed Islamic Group, which was strengthened by the Algerian veterans of the war in Afghanistan and by the radical intelligentsia of the, so called, Jihad Salafi. Those experienced fighters spread their own fighting policies, mutated during the war, among the part of the recruited youngsters with low social status, who, having only basic education and being influenced by a random Emir, are ready to "burn", which in fact means, die. When assessing the environment of potential recruitment, it is believed that the task of dismantling these groups is impossible because the area is constantly changing. This phenomenon is partly due to the very nature of these very fragmented "groups", which sometimes spread like a flu virus. According to analyses carried out in France that have been released to the public on the Internet, the kernel consists of fifty to a hundred people who undoubtedly have been on the terrorist path before. Then there are circles of devoted radicals that support networks financially and materially, further there are circles of hostile fundamentalists, less devoted, but willing to join at any time. The terrorist network is difficult to recognize because the activists can quickly go from one circle to another. It should be noted that, unlike the criminal environment in which criminals would rather live in isolation, very mobile Jihad fighters make contact with other activists on every continent, taking care not to be spotted. A remark for those investigating this issue, attention should be paid to the factions of Islam, which largely affect the rise of extremist tendencies in it, as well as to those

trends, which both in the past and today have been the banner of religious and political mobilisation of believers to Jihad against infidels [5, 29].

### **Partial analysis of selected terrorist attacks**

While presenting or analysing selected terrorist attacks it is necessary to start from the one which opened the twenty-first century. The eleventh of September marks the anniversary of the tragedy, which took place in the United States, in the cities of New York and Washington. Nineteen suicide bombers prepared for suicidal death bought tickets for four domestic flights of American airlines [6] and then, terrorizing the crews of the aircraft, intending to direct them on a terrorist mission in New York, selecting the WTC as targets, and in the capital of the United States, targeting the Pentagon and the White House or the Capitol, however, there is no certainty about that event, because different information is given. As a result of these activities, within twenty minutes two passenger planes hit the twin towers of the WTC. The first Boeing 767 crashed into the North Tower, its occupants were ninety-two people, after seventeen minutes the second Boeing 767 with sixty people on board flew into the next Tower [7]. At about nine forty another Boeing 757 fell on the Pentagon, along with fifty-nine people on board. Several dozen minutes later the last hijacked plane with its forty occupants collapsed and crashed on the fields near Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, and this was probably because the passengers of the flight began to defend themselves and resist during the terrorist operation [8], [9]. The fact that the machine did not fall on another venue of strategic or political importance can be credited to the people who were on board this plane on the ill-fated day, and their courage and determination reduced the effects of the insane action of men overpowered by madness of hatred. The spectacular terrorist activities briefly outlined above were the first massive attack in the history of the United States and, according to journalists, who should be agreed with, were designed to shock with their cruelty, impact civilians, random and vulnerable, as well as destroy or humiliate both people and the most important symbols of American pride and financial, military and political strength. These activities were intended to show that the American State is fragile, and it is not

invincible, and at the same time, to shock the world and show that cruelty knows no limits, either human, geographic or spatial.

The terrorist attacks described above led to the tragic death of many people and the suffering of their families. At the same time they led to sudden crashes on the US stock markets, bankruptcies of many airlines, as well as to the general confusion in the state and global economy [8], [9]. The intention and the objective of these attacks was primarily to cause anxiety and, consequently, to result in a large number of victims. The world was supposed to speak about the attacks, and the goal was achieved, and in addition, the organisers of a terrorist attack managed to mobilise the support of faithful Muslims, which they wished to drum up for their case, and at the same time they managed to develop their affection and enthusiasm, by showing that victory can be achieved by force and violence [10, 11-12].

Another attack to be analysed took place at the Moscow Dubrovka theatre (musical Nord-Ost). A different country, different people, different motive, yet similar bestiality. On October 23, 2002 took place one of the most horrific terrorist attacks in the Russian history. Chechen militant formation was preparing a plan of an attack under the leadership of a militant leader, Aslan Maschadov. It envisaged not only taking hundreds of hostages in the theatre during the performance, but arranging an explosion of cars parked in the points where there were large clusters of people. The date on which the action was to be carried out was initially November, 7<sup>th</sup>. The leader of the terrorist group was supposed to be Movsar Barayev. In order not to attract the attention of Russian special forces, Barayev's fighters, temporarily ceased to carry out armed operations. What is more, the separatists spread the wrong information that the leader was seriously injured, and even killed during a military action. Later, the Commander of the Russian units in Chechnya announced that a few days before Barayev was eliminated [10, 11-12]. The group of attackers consisted of about forty people, half of whom were Shaheed women, or in other words, terrorists who inherently were to become suicide bombers [11].

According to Chechen fighters, the most convenient points for the attack were: the Moscow railway station, the youth Dubrovka theatre and the Moscow state theatre. The

second venue was selected as the main target, due to the fact that the theatre was not far from the city centre and it housed a large number of people. For one stage of the terrorist attack, the fighters bought three vehicles. There were special containers mounted in their fuel tanks, which allowed normal use of the cars. One half of each tank was filled with petrol and in the other a bomb was installed. These bombings were to take place next to the buildings of the Sejm, the Tchaikovsky concert hall and McDonald's restaurant [12].

However, the attacks associated with the use of cars failed, as one of the vehicles exploded six hours earlier (at McDonald's), and in the other two booster mechanism did not go off. As a result of the action, which alerted the police and special forces, the terrorists decided to change the date of the attack from November 7 to October 23 [12].

Consequently, on October 23, 2002 at the Dubrovka theatre there were about nine hundred people in the audience, watching a famous music performance entitled "Nord-Ost". At about 21:15 terrorists entered the building by force. From that moment hell on earth began for those people, lasting three days [10]. During that time, the fighters installed bombs in the theatre hall, and women - suicide bombers, with "Shaheed belts" on, were standing or sitting near the walls. All devices and explosives were directed

at each other, so that in the event of an explosion the appearing wave would deny any chance of survival [13]. The terrorists also announced that they bore no grudge against the foreigners who were their hostages and promised to release them later. They checked identity cards, then separated women and children from the men in different parts of the room, at night they released the children [14]. During the negotiations with the authorities, the bombers made their demands, i.e. ending of armed operations within the territory of Chechnya. The terrorists demanded the arrival of representatives of the Red Cross and the Doctors Without Borders organizations [10]. One of the women-suicide bombers said that they would stop at nothing, because they are following the path of Allah and even if they die, there will be no end, because there are plenty of others who are just like them [15]. The authorities soon make a decision about the storming of the theatre building, special forces extinguish the lights, and as they enter the theatre, they pump in sleeping gas and incapacitating agent through the ventilation, upon which they eliminate the terrorists to take over the building with the hostages. All the fighters were killed, probably most while asleep [12].

Organisational chaos and lack of medical assistance resulted in a large number of deaths, losses among the hostages exceeded one hundred people.

The table shows the data and the number of people who suffered as a result of the attack.

<i>Number of bombers</i>	<i>Weapons owned by terrorists</i>	<i>Number of casualties</i>
40 (including 19 Shaheed women) All terrorists were killed.	Kalashnikov rifles, Makarov's pistols, grenades, explosives, Shaheed belts.	About 130 people (most of whom died as a result of a badly organised rescue operation).

Table: own study based on the data [11]

In these attacks in the territory of Russia you can also see the ruthlessness of the authorities and lack of attempts to undertake the dialogue with the terrorists, encompassed in the words "Russia does not negotiate with terrorists". Storming of Russian services had more tragic consequences than the terrorist acts themselves. The action of the Russian authorities shows negligible negotiating means but the desire to ultimately crack down on terrorists at any cost and to demonstrate the power and staunch of an empire. Unfortunately, at the cost of human life.

### Differences in activities and interactions between terrorist groups

When comparing the attacks undergoing analysis, their varying degrees of complexity need to be noted. On one hand there is a long-planned attack on the WTC, where the terrorists were trained how to fly passenger aircraft, conducting accurate reconnaissance, analysing the most severe strategies and scenarios. On the other hand there are the

- Islamic attackers;
- choice of time and place of the attack so as to make it as painful as possible;
- directed against the world empires;
- lack of any moral principles.

The main differences between the above-mentioned attacks include:

- method and the degree of preparation of the attack;
- complexity of the attack;
- nature of the attack (typically religious, and the bombings intended as a retaliation for military actions or treated as "an act of liberation");
- killing as an end in itself, as a bargaining chip;
- persons carrying out the attack (Chechen soldiers, fighters);
- terrorists' technical facilities;
- the number of people engaged in an attack;
- gender of the attackers (e.g., women-Shaheed among the Chechens);
- the venue of the attack;
- the duration of the terrorist action.

attacks from Russia, or the ones which are more and more common, in the form of a frantic shooting to random people or, in other words, deliberate murder. In technical terms, these examples can also be placed on two extremes, whereas the common features of the analysed attacks include the following components:

### Conclusion

Nowadays each new week brings information about subsequent attacks. The threat of terrorist acts has become large enough to be permanently written in everyday reality. This brings the constant fear of new threats.

The development of terrorism over the past decades has been very dynamic in many ways, both in terms of technology, globalization, financing, mode of action, the scale of the attacks, but also morality. What scares the average citizen most is the direct vicinity of the terrorist acts, the fact that he might at any time become one of the victims of another attack. The events of recent decades show that terrorists choose large clusters of people to cause the largest possible number of casualties. In addition, the mass media, through coverage from the sites of the attacks or making far-reaching conclusions cause an additional increase in social anxiety. Among the current global issues terrorism is noticeable in terms of danger, ahead of many other problems. Of course, such an effect was intended by terrorists. The greater the response to terrorist acts, the more it stimulates terrorist groups to commit new crimes. Terrorists take the appearance of panic as a factor strengthening the importance of their activities and an additional basis for satisfying their demands. This is one of the reasons why they take on responsibility for the committed bombings. "Terrorism is theatre", as it is designed for those who are looking, rather than those who become its victims. The effect of constant psychological pressure appears, and a peculiar apocalyptic symbolism of terror is manifested: "The world will be as we will make it, or it will cease to exist ". In addition, flooding of Western Europe by a wave of Islamic immigrants and their militant attitude intensifies the feeling of fear among Europeans. This illustrates the strength of Jihad by migration, that is, "Hegira", which may not be as direct as the armed acts of terror, but changes the image of the contemporary Western Europe in a very suggestive way [16].

Thanks to the achievements of science and globalisation, relationships between different terrorist groups have clearly tightened. Terrorist organisations from different countries support each other by exchanging experience and documentation related to the attacks, provide places to hide the bombers after attacks, organise training camps, recruit new people and often exchange their fighters among themselves, or offer their military instructors to the disposal of other groups. Owing to such a state of affairs, we are not dealing with single, independent organizations which they used to be in

the past, but with a powerful, international community of Muslim terrorist groups known as the "global jihadist front", whose objective is to fight against the culture of the West.

The Internet played a major role in the development of such a structure of the terrorist world, enabling terrorists to act and make contact anonymously. The new means of communication, in particular computer technologies, foster considering the local and global religious-political confrontation in different terms. The emerging system of world economy leads to unilateral enrichment of states, transnational corporations. Most of the terrorist movement has anti-globalist or generally anti-Western targeting, thus positioning itself in the global political-ideological space.

After the analysis of the above and other events involving extremists, we can draw the following conclusions:

- among all the contemporary issues, Islamic extremism occupies a special place due to its global nature, the severity of the attacks and the degree of cruelty;
- modern technologies are conducive to the development of extremist activities;
- the distinctive nature of the transnational contemporary terrorism is a direct derivative of the globalisation process;
- extremists are offered various financial, political, technical and other support by certain countries;
- contemporary terrorism has a complex structure of organization and external relations;
  - close connection between international political terrorism and the criminal world is so obvious, that sometimes we are not able to distinguish one from the other;
  - there is an clearly noticeable increase in its military component;
  - a growing number of the attacks are carried out with the use of basic military measures, causing a similar loss of life as the great attacks years ago;
  - the characteristic features of modern extremism are ideological fundamentalism and propaganda potential.

Modern psychology is familiar with the concept of "Herostrates' complex", which means desire to do anything that will bring notoriety and fame, attract attention and boost self-esteem of a frustrated individual. Seeing how big and complex a problem extremist terrorism is nowadays and observing the consequences of its dynamic and tragic development, it may be concluded that only joint efforts of the progressive, global community will make it feasible to counteract this extremely dangerous phenomenon.

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