

THE INTERPLAY AND IMPACT OF ORGANISED CRIME AND TERRORISM ON THE PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY: CASE STUDY OF ISIS

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ABSTRACT

As the greatest threats to the national security of states as well as to the global security in the post-Cold War world were considered those of an asymmetric nature. However, nowadays, because of the policies of certain countries, the presence of instability and failed states in many regions of the world as well as the strengthening of non-state actors have affected and changed the previous situation. Today, states are facing risks of a symmetric nature, which, however, include features of an asymmetric nature as well. The distortion of religious missions, so as to use them as a reason to fight for strategic and geopolitical interests of state or non-state actors, is one example. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the interplay and impact of organized crime and terrorism on the process and the development of the concept of security. The case of the terrorist organization ISIS will be analysed. The aim of the paper is to identify the factors / elements that have contributed to the cooperation and strengthening of criminal and terrorist organizations, and the efforts that state actors have to undertake when facing these kinds of threats as well. The data used in this paper are based on the official sources of state governments and international institutions.

Keywords: Security, organized crime, terrorism, ISIS.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the biggest threats to security trace back to the activities of transnational, non-state actors such as criminal and terrorist organizations. Under such circumstances where more and more states are losing the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force (the monopoly on violence) inside and outside the state borders, the challenges towards these non-state actors take on a new dimension, because in such cases the threat to security does not emerge as a result of a certain state or of certain groups that might have a specific motive to achieve certain goals. There are major differences between the different types of transnational organizations, but it should be emphasized that one can also find many similarities. Terrorist and criminal organizations display all the features of a rational actor, as it is observed in the use of the whole space, of all the possibilities of this new system in which we live („globalization“). Another factor that gives these organizations the trait of a rational actor is the fact that they use violence and terror as means of achieving their goals, which is similar to the way state actors proceed in order to realize their objectives.

Nowadays, the cooperation between criminal and terrorist organizations is considered to constitute a major concern for the world in terms of national and global security. This is observed in the use of illegal markets as well as in the use of different forms of organized crime such as drug trafficking, theft, forgery, arms trafficking etc. by terrorist organizations. Both types of non-state actors benefit through this cooperation in terms of the accumulation of large amounts of capital as well as in terms of regenerating their resources in order to better counteract governmental (national) and international reactions. The strengthening of transnational, non-state terrorist actors is identified nowadays as the biggest threat to global

security. Unlike criminal organizations which regard economic profit as the motive behind their actions, terrorist organizations have major „political“ goals. Uncertainty increases when these terrorist actors get stronger as they apply in their activities methods used by criminal organizations, which can serve as a factor for the radicalization of individuals who are part of criminal activities. In this case, the states of the international system are faced with a strong non-state actor, which is still not localized definitely, whereby the relation between the states and the actor is of an asymmetric nature.

CRIMINAL AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

As it was already mentioned, one may identify differences as well as similarities between these two transnational organizations. The first difference is related to the motives, objectives and goals that have played a role during the creation of these organizations. Terrorist organizations are political organizations: Despite the fact that the motivation behind their foundation can be in some cases based on religious grounds, they ultimately have the final goal of triggering a political change. With regard to criminal organizations, one can say that their primary objective is related to profit. Another important difference between them is the use of violence on various levels. Activities of terrorist organizations are characterized by high levels of violence, terror and a high level of psychological impact. Although criminal organizations use violence as well, we can speak here of another level of violence, as it consists e.g. in murdering politicians, journalists, rivals etc. The use of violence by criminal organisations is a tactic to protect their structures and, unlike terrorist organisations, they are selective when it comes to the proceeding, i.e. “choosing” the kind of violence they want to use in a specific case instead of just acting randomly. Another difference relates to the use of corruption as a tool for achieving goals. Criminal organizations use corruption as a strategy to facilitate their trafficking activities and to reduce the risk of being identified by the central authorities. However, as far as it concerns terrorist organizations, corruption does not play an important role for their activities. Instead, high levels of propaganda as a method for persuading more and more individuals to join their cause and to make states join their cause as well are of a far greater importance, since the organizations in this way are able to find funding and support, and thus strengthen their future activities. The similarity between these two non-state actors consists in the fact that both of them rely on networks, which may be local or global. These networks represent a very effective method for avoiding possible attacks, i.e. effective responses by the governments. Both transnational criminal and terrorist organizations make use of the institutional weakness in fragile states, i.e. they are active and operate within the state borders (Baylis, Wirtz, Gray & Cohen, 2012: 236-239).

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL TRENDS IN TERRORISM AND ORGANIZED CRIME. CASE STUDY: ISLAMIC TERRORISM (ISIS)

In order to understand the terrorist organization ISIS, which is considered today as the most powerful organisation affecting the stability of the international system, causing high levels of insecurity in the international environment, it is important to understand first the Wahhabism movement. This movement shares similar features with ISIS in terms of similar motivation behind their actions, as well as in terms of the methods and the tools these two movements make use when active. Wahhabism is a movement within Islam, which has defined as its main purpose the „cleansing“ of Islam, i.e. the return to the concept of Islam as understood and practiced by Prophet Muhammad and the three subsequent generations after him. The two main pillars on which their view was grounded were the Qur'an and Sunnah, the latter one being stories and narratives („hadith“) not included in the Qur'an, which,

however, play a significant role, as they address issues of public and private spheres of human life. The fundamentals of Sharia law consist of the Qur'an and Sunnah and on this basis the rules for the daily moral behaviour are dictated. In Saudi Arabia, we can observe a strict application of the rigid regulations based on the Sharia law, which is the reason why the country became the centre of Islam. Another important factor was the location of the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the country's territory. The philosophy of the Wahhabism movement in terms of respecting and following the rules of the Sharia law served as the basis for the formulation of the movement's strategy and its activity. All those individuals who do not respect these rules and do not make them part of their way of living should be murdered, women and girls would experience violence and the properties of these people would be confiscated.

So, the doctrine is based on three main pillars: one ruler, an authority, a mosque where the authority to implement the laws belonged to the king of Saudi Arabia who had absolute power given to him by senior officials of the movement of Wahhabism. Based on this philosophy, the movement undertook a campaign to install a regime of fear and terror by spreading the use of force and violence and by legitimising its activities under the banner of jihad. Its strategy was implemented by conquering and ruling local communities and forcing conversions to Wahhabism. This alliance had control over most of the Arabian Peninsula and it has been confirmed that it has perpetrated frequent attacks in the city of Medina, in Syria and in Iraq with the goal to control more territories (Sa'id Mahmud Najm A- Amiri, 2002: 44-51). We can say that the organization ISIS is a contemporary movement of the Wahhabism ideology. It has the same motives and follows the same objectives as the Wahhabism movement, but differs only in the fact that it does not support the claim that Saudi Arabia should continue to exercise its authority of being the centre of Islam in the Middle East. The reason is Saudi Arabia's alliance with the Western World and the influence the latter has exercised on the country's modernization process. ISIS is similar to the Wahhabi movement also in terms of the tactics that it makes use of, such as using violence increasingly, creating and spreading a "climate of terror", and as far as it concerns their main goals as well: Both organizations / movements aim at gaining control over certain communities of Sunni Islam, an objective which is accomplished through numerous campaigns for the conquest of certain territories in the name of jihad. Other similarities can be drawn with regard to the propaganda instruments both groups use in order to enhance their popularity, the methods of recruitment (by using force) and the cooperation with other organization, so as to increase their power and thus enhance their position.

TERRORIST ORGANIZATION ISIS

As a jihadist organisation, ISIS draws its membership from Sunni extremists who have set as a primary objective the re-establishment of the concept of the Islamic faith as it was practiced during the era of Prophet Muhammed, when the basis for the Sharia law was derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In other words, the organisation's main objective is the establishment of the Islamic caliphate. The re-establishment of the golden age of Islam can be achieved through the holy war (jihad) against the internal and external enemies of Islam. The roots of the organisation's foundation trace back to the military campaign launched by the United States in Iraq in 2003 and the fact that the US after the invasion of the country encouraged the establishment of a democratic system under the leadership of the Shiites. This and the chaos created by the war were incentives for the creation of the organisation. The Sunni population of Iraq, despite being a minority that accounts for around 22% of the country's total population, has traditionally controlled the country. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a former

participant in the uprising that erupted after the US invasion of Iraq, is now considered as a leader of ISIS. In 2010, he became the leader of the Iraqi Al-Qaeda, which later became known as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant), founded in April 2013. The Caliphate's territory would include all the region of Syria (Bilad al-Sham). Furthermore, the Caliphate would extend its control over a far larger region that would encompass territories from West Africa to Central Asia, whereby even some areas in Europe would become part of this new state (jihadi forums on August 18, 2014). The organisation achieved some of its first goals with regard to the Syrian territory through its participation in the country's ongoing civil war, as it occupied and took control over the city of Al-Raqqah, which was a reason why the organisation itself developed from ISIL to ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) with Al-Raqqah as its declared capital. The organisation's next strategy would consist in provoking tensions between the Iraq's Sunni minority and the Shiite-led government with the purpose of gaining control over Iraq's northern and southern regions. As a result of the created tensions, ISIS could manage to invade the province of Fallujah in the vicinity of Iraq's capital and put it under its control, and afterwards it occupied and took control of the city of Mosul (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015: 304-308). This was followed by the fall of several Libyan cities (Benghazi, Sirte, Derna, Nofaliya), as several terrorist organizations took control and declared allegiance to ISIS, publicly supporting the organisation's cause. Benghazi e.g. came under control of the terrorist organisation Ansar al-Sharia, which declared the city to a new Islamic State allied with ISIS. Overall, we might conclude that ISIS' main strategy consists on the one side in seizing control of certain cities by force and violence, and on the other side in operating (mainly) through its affiliates / branches established in other countries (such as in Turkey, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, in the Sinai province in Egypt, in Afghanistan, Tunisia, Algeria etc.). The aim of this strategy is strengthening the organisation's overall position.

Nowadays, the terrorist organisation of the Islamic State is posing the greatest threat to global security, as this is demonstrated through the acceleration of its operations in more territories of the world and the activity of its several affiliated groups. Its strategy of seizing control of cities and territories in countries characterized by instability unquestionably has some effects on a global scale. The Islamic State represents itself as the current greatest threat to global security because of the following characteristics it displays: Its capability to conduct military operations in Syria and in Iraq, which is enabled by the foreign fighters (usually from the Arab muslim world but also from Western countries), whereby this also demonstrates the extent of the Islamic State's impact and its sphere of influence; the possession of arsenals of weapons which are similar to the arsenals of regular national armies; the size of the occupied territories (one third of Iraq and Syria); significant financial resources as a result of the control over the infrastructure in the occupied territories, e.g. the revenues coming from oil export and criminal activities, such as robbery, abduction etc. We can also mention the organisation's success in creating a climate of insecurity, fear and terror for the public opinion worldwide, conducted through numerous violent attacks and the use of modern technological devices of mass communication. Through these, the organisation releases videos with the purpose of finding more support and demonstrating its strength (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2014: 3-6). ISIS is considered as a major threat to global security also by NATO, as this was reflected during the Wales Summit on 4 and 5 September 2014. The Summit stressed that the threat the ISIS poses is a major threat, and that as the Islamic State's ability to undertake military operations has become similar to the one of regular national armies, the North Atlantic Alliance has to strengthen its military structure and to adapt to the new reality. Under the new circumstances, the alliance adopted

the new action plan and determined its readiness to counter the threats posed by ISIS (Wales Summit Declaration, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Nowadays, under the new geopolitical strategic circumstances, ISIS is an example for the most sophisticated terrorist organisation because it functions in certain aspects as a state, financing its own military infrastructure. Just like countries use their military strength and their capacities for the defence of their national interest, so does ISIS protect the cause for which it was created and struggles for its fulfilment. Beyond that, ISIS is also a good example for the cooperation between various terrorist organisations and groups that use various forms of organised crime in their activity. However, at the same time, as the organisation becomes stronger and develops the capabilities and characteristics of a state, the traditional concept of security, where certain states are the actors that pose a threat and the scope of security is the state itself, re-emerges and gains importance. If the states of the international system do not take the necessary measures in order to combat and eliminate the activities of this organisation through the securitization of this case, the international environment will be characterized by high levels of insecurity and a state of chaos. Each state should take the full responsibility for the development of its capabilities in order to be effective against this major security challenge. Also, governments should become fully aware of the fact that inter-governmental cooperation is an important element for achieving positive results in the fight against terrorism and the creation of a more peaceful and secure world as well.

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