

TERRORISM AND GENOCIDE

Review Paper

TERORIZAM I GENOCID

Pregledni naučni rad

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Abstract

Reason(s) for writing and research problem(s): To point out the symbiotic relationship and the role of terrorism as a support instrument in carrying out genocide in form of spreading fear and forcing movement or expelling the population from a certain territory.

Aims of the paper (scientific and/or social): This paper seeks to find a connection between terrorism and genocide, phenomena which have a common denominator – violence, destruction and massive loss of lives.

Methodology/Design: The author uses analysis – synthesis, and deductive – inductive processes.

Research/paper limitations: One of the differences is in the target population –victims of terrorism do not necessarily belong to a single nation or a nationality, whereas genocide, by definition, aims at such groups.

Results/Findings: The detailed analysis of the problem is further enriched by the author's deliberate emphasis of 'obvious errors' which prevented from developing a wholesome scientific definition.

General conclusion: The paper brings out a conclusion that terrorism and genocide have a common denominator in political goals, and both use violence and destruction.

Research/paper validity: The author discusses difficulties in defining terrorism, holding that the key obstacle is removed if one abides by the rules of the logical scientific definition of a phenomenon.

Keywords

terrorism, genocide, definition, phenomenon, violence, political, goal

Introduction

Defining terrorism is a troublesome task. Karcic (2002) mentions three related difficulties:

'First of all, terrorism is a very old phenomenon in human history. It is manifested in various forms and appears in different historical circumstances and as such is difficult to be placed in a definition that would include all of its essential characteristics. Second, the term as such possesses negative political connotation and hence is often used by some governments to discredit political opponents regardless of their opponents' methods. Third, propaganda and unscrupulous utilization of this term has made the objective of defining and studying it rather strenuous.

Having confirmed the existence of the aforementioned and other difficulties, as well as the fact that the definition of terrorism can be a form of a political and ideological fight, we have to make a few related remarks.

The first remark relates to the difficulty stemming from the age of terrorism as a historical phenomenon. Society features significantly older phenomena such as societal groups, marriage, state, organization, community, and violence which have also changed over time but which are as well defined in the social sciences.

It seems that the key difficulty is in the approach to defining and the orientation in respecting the rules of the logical scientific defining of the phenomenon.

If it is a 'very old historical phenomenon', for it to differ from other phenomena, it must fulfil at least two important conditions: first, its essential, vital characteristics had to hold through all time otherwise, the original phenomenon would have transformed into some other or would have disappeared; second, certain necessary forms of manifestations of the essence had to survive so that the phenomenon remains recognizable. Therefore, the essence of the statement 'very old historical phenomenon' is that, essential characteristics and manifestations of the terrorism have been present and visible over a very long historical period.

In that regard, a question is raised, how come that it is such an old phenomenon, when the term terrorism was for the first time used in 1975.

As regards to the second difficulty, we can state that the difficulties in the scientific research are diverse but they are not an obstacle. The best example that proves the point is the practice of politics and political propaganda which distract but do not obstruct the existence and effectiveness of political science. On the contrary, they are the subject of political science. If terrorism is a 'historical', and therefore social, political, legal, and sociological phenomenon, then it is the subject of those sciences and their definitions.

There is a variety of definitions and various approaches to defining. Therefore, we will either bring out a definition from an empirical or theoretical perspective, or a combination of both, but a mere comparison of statements and words will not be of any help.

The third remark relates to the complexity of the phenomenon. With regard to that, it is important to underline the following: the more complex the phenomenon, the more important a deeper and complete understanding of it, and the more important an adequate definition.

Another point of view holds that a definition of the terms and characteristics of the terrorism is sufficient, understood as an expression of a phase achieved by some 'definition experts'. Defining or merely stating facts which can otherwise appear alone or in a group of other phenomena, without any essential relation between them, connection, role, function, quality and

quantity, do not speak of a synthesised wholeness of the phenomenon such as would identify it. Nonetheless, they are a good approach to reaching a 'synthetic' definition.

Drawing on Schlagheck(1988), Karcic (2002) points at one such an attempt of determination. He emphasizes the following terms:

- 1) **Terrorism includes use of violence or threats of violence.**
- 2) **Terrorist violence is unpredictable.** The unpredictability and uncertainty of the violence increase the anxiety as everybody is affected.
- 3) **The victims of terrorism always have symbolic value.** It is quite common to make difference between direct victims of the violence who are really attacked and the wider audience which is the object of spreading fear and to whom terrorist send a message by means of violence.
- 4) **Terrorists want publicity.** Terrorist do not want simply to 'scare' their victims. They want to achieve specific goals. Those goals may be personal gain (criminal terrorism), manifestation of mental illnesses and disorders (psychopathic terrorism) or political (political terrorism). Political goals may include national liberation, imposition of a certain ideology etc.
- 5) **Terrorism has a great flexibility.** Terrorism can be used by anybody – governments, groups, individuals, and it can be used against anybody. The flexibility of terrorism can be seen in its transformation from the domestic problems of some countries (domestic terrorism) to international problems (international terrorism).
- 6) **Terrorism is a very complex issue.** Terrorism encompasses numerous forms of violence, various motives and it does not have concrete solutions. Complexity of the phenomenon can be noted in the disagreement about when and for whom this label can be used.

Let us consider the first point that 'terrorism includes violence or threats of violence'.

It is evident that the threat of violence and violence are not the same, and that every act of violence and every threat of violence cannot be considered terrorism. That violence – the violence of terrorism – has to be adequate and it has to be sufficient. That is, it has to have characteristics which make it different from other forms of violence which are not terrorism (violence used for maintenance of order, violence in counterterrorism, etc.)

Also, the threat of violence has to have certain forms – content, probability, dimension, etc. Every rule which includes sanctions is a threat of violence, at least with regard to its nature and definition of violence.

Violence and the threat of violence include three aspects, those being the intention, the act which inflicts damage, and the victims who are the target or witnesses of the violence. All of the named aspects have to be determined clearly and precisely, qualitatively and quantitatively. Their interrelations in the violence have to be specified as important factors in determining terrorism.

The point of view that 'terrorist violence is unpredictable' has been accurate in various times, social situations and according to various degrees of social development. In contemporary conditions, a prognosis with a determined degree of probability is possible.

The point of view that 'everyone is affected' attracts far more attention. This attitude we understand as statement in considerably milder form: 'it is possible that many can be affected'. This is particularly difficult to consider in text which deal with definitions, whereas one need to be careful in utilization of the terms 'everyone', 'all' etc. which imply no limitations.

The next postulate that 'the victims have symbolic value', can be accepted only with the addition that it is not only about symbolic but also a practical value. The terrorist targets are real objects and people, and they have to be concretized. Some of the targets:

- a) may really symbolize something,
- b) may not symbolize something as such but the attack may symbolize something,
- c) at the time of the terrorist attack, neither targets nor subjects of the attacked, time of the place symbolize anything, but the process of symbolization is induced on the basis of concrete effects of the action by the work of media, subjects of terrorism and by the acts of terrorism.

The statement that 'terrorists want publicity' is wrongly formulated.

Terrorists seek to get positive publicity in any way possible. Publicity is also sought for some terrorist leaders and heroes, who, at the same time, like to keep the secretive and mystical image around them. Other terrorists avoid publicity and prefer secrecy, as it is an important condition of the survival and success of terrorism. At the same time, publicity is not a 'wish' of terrorists, but is their essential instrument by which they achieve certain effects (e.g. scaring off) and gain sympathizers in some places. That publicity therefore has characteristics of selectivity and propaganda, as well as attributes of direct and elements of indirect. Every successful bigger terrorist act enables a sensationalist treatment, which is a real 'treat' for the media.

The position that 'only political goals of terrorism' exist ought to be corrected. Political terrorism has political goals, but every act of terrorism has, to a certain degree, political effects.

If every form of terrorism has political goals as a priority, classifications of the terrorism are then not necessary because all varieties of terrorism are only varieties of the original terrorism and represent manifestations in different phases. Differentiating 'criminal terrorism' and 'psychopathic terrorism' from the 'political' confirms our point of view. The said classification renews and reopens the issue of criminality of terrorism.

We will stay with the issue of 'political goals (of the terrorism) which can be national liberation, imposition of a certain ideology etc.' Whether national freedom is a generally adopted value as it is commonly thought, or not – is a question. If the national freedom is socially and internationally adopted, very important, and highly valued, and as such is the integral part of the human and civil rights, then there is no place for the classification 'terrorism'. The fight for national freedom is legal and legitimate, and the violent deprivation of that freedom is illegal and illegitimate, and that can be considered terrorism – the state terrorism.

The sixth postulate that 'the terrorism possesses a great flexibility' we accept as correct, but instead choose to reformulate it in the following manner: 'Flexibility of the terrorism is its important characteristic.'

Flexibility is realized through various transformations of lesser importance. In this case, the transformation does not lead to changes of its essence.

We agree with the statement that 'the terrorism is a complex question'. However, terrorism is not a question but a social and political reality, a complex phenomenon, which raises many questions. If the terrorism is defined, then it is not a label that can be freely put on something just like that, as it relates to a certain social reality which is named and defined. Those who promote the orientation that terrorism cannot be defined and should not be defined 'because it can be recognized', certainly express their wish to keep the possibility of a free labelling, depending on the need of the one who does 'labelling'.

Presentation of the difficulties, problems in defining terrorism, various approaches and orientations in defining terrorism, points at two visible errors that obstructed development of a scientific definition of the terrorism as a whole:

- 1) a biased approach that stemmed from politics, ideology, strong commitment to a sole science and/or a scientific discipline, or a theoretical-methodological concept etc.
- 2) a commitment to a 'shortcut' which primarily led to leaning on a) practical (empirical) findings, or b) solely on theory (such as analysis of multitude of definitions).

Being aware of all the above mentioned but also other difficulties, we will seek to develop and propose a valuable and generally acceptable scientific definition.

Our proposed definition is derived from the empirical and theoretical findings, of which only some are scientific. The approach itself does not clearly determine the paradigm of the basis of understanding and interpretation of the proposed definition, so in order for it to have a support in the empirical, scientifically unverified finding, it is desirable to present the definition, a then explain its basic postulates.

The proposed definition is as follows:

'Terrorism is a historical socio-political phenomenon which is born and grows in the conditions of sufficiently deep and intensive conflict borne by actors of terrorism – certain organized weaker and smaller socio-political groups of subjects or countries which fight against the existing socio-political or the international order in an organized and systematic manner by using illegitimate and illegal, cruel and unpredictable (hardly predictable) criminal violence, using available methods and means which provoke massive and individual injustice and targeted and collateral victims, and inflict various damages while not usually achieving its ultimate socio-political aim.'

This somewhat longer and detailed definition reminds us of the more descriptive ones. The interesting aspect of it is that it treats politics as the first higher term, with the society above it. It is based on analysis and synthesis, and deductive – inductive methods. Considering its content and form, it is fit for development of norms and systems of norms – legal, ethical etc.

Based on the fact that every definition is a starting point for defining criteria, classification and classification systems, which is an important provision of the valid scientific and logical definitions, two relevant classification criteria can be derived thereon.

The first is means of terrorism, and the second criterion is the subject of terrorism.

In relation to the first criterion, the following has been mentioned: (1) nuclear terrorism, (2) chemical terrorism, (3) biological terrorism, (4) cyber terrorism, (5) ideological terrorism and (6) religious terrorism.

The problem relating to the application of this criterion is rather complex. First of all, one of the key characteristics of the terrorism is human victims (loss of life), which in e.g. cyber terrorism is not the case or at least is not directly the case.

Secondly, the application does not sufficiently make difference between the roles of means and motives (such is the case in ideological terrorism), while some criteria can be misused and are misused (there are a number of examples with religious and ideological terrorism).

The other classification criterion is **subject**, which is also inadequately functionally defined.

For instance, differentiating political, economic, cultural and other types of terrorism is very difficult in relation to the previously mentioned criteria. Particular problem lies in the fact that various terrorisms may have and may have not all the characteristics of terrorism, and may be functionally related. For example, differentiating domestic (interstate) terrorism can be treated only conditionally.

Secondly, the international terrorism requires developing a new set of classification criteria. That is how we can talk about 'exported' and 'imported' terrorism and 'parastate terrorism'.

As a classification criterion one can use **success**. From our point of view, it is hard or even impossible to have objective indicators. Usually, success is associated with the achievement of 'big goals', therefore successful terrorism achieves 'big goals' by using terror. However, the achievement of 'big goals', strategic ones in particular, cannot be considered the only criterion. If the success can be supplemented by further criterion of the success of terrorists acts is a question which will not be treated hereafter.

The herewith presented classifications of terrorism in relation with another phenomenon, genocide, require a review of classification that has, as a factor of classification, mentioned religious and state terrorism.

Without going deeper into analysis of these questions, we shall briefly review and emphasize the following: all the terrorist organizations, whatever they may declare themselves, do not have their true basis in the religion and in contemporary confessions. To them, the religion is a mere excuse, a means to justify their acts to the public. The criterion 'religious' can only lean on religious and confessional affiliation of the actors of the terrorism, however, the structures of the various subjects of terrorism do not allow that. According to the essence of the presented understanding, we can state that the true religious or confessional terrorism do not exist.

One of the important problems relates to developing criteria for 'state terrorism'. With regard to that, the first question relates to the kind and the degree of the state engagement in the organization of terrorism and carrying out of the terrorist acts, so that a state could be identified as a 'terrorist state', and its terrorism as a state terrorism.

It is evident that an important characteristics of this criterion is the subject – or the actor of the terrorism.

But, what kind of actor? Does it suffice for one state to be an inspirer, supporter, financier etc. of the terrorism or it is supposed to carry out terrorist acts as well? Does the entire state apparatus have to be involved as well as the state as a whole, or it suffices that only a certain part is involved?

The interdependence between the classification and the definition of terrorism has been revealed through the questions of the difficulty in classifying terrorism, whereas the following

aspects need to be emphasized: first, our previous definition does not provide basis for the presented classifications of terrorism, it only exposes the weaknesses of the classification system and the need for its further development.

Second, the interdependence of and the link between definition and classification of the term terrorism, as well as the role and function of the definition in the process of development of scientific finding and social practice.

Attention could be also focused on one of the understandings of the classification, such as its role of the starting form for measuring.

Genocide

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) considers genocide to be 'any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III of the Convention speaks about the acts based on which one can discover, identify, name and mark the acts which are the consequence of the activity – doing of the carrying out, planning, inciting, attempting and complicity, such as:

- a) Genocide;
- b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- e) Complicity in genocide.

It is only in the Article III of the Convention that responsibility and punishment of the perpetrators or those who contribute in any way to genocide, irrespective of their social and political status, domestic or international is treated. One of the serious and particularly important issues relating to genocide is the issue of qualitative and quantitative indicators that are at the basis of various data and arguments which are collated, based on which genocide is detected and proved to have taken place in a specific place and a specific timeframe. The issue of selection of data, its classification and ranking are all factors of validity and credibility of data about the phenomenon, problem and the subject of the research of genocide.

The relation between terrorism and genocide

Terrorism is a very dynamic social phenomenon which transforms its content and forms of action. Such is the relation between terrorism and genocide. It can be stated that terrorism precedes genocide. Genocide is based on activities with very serious, complex and long term

consequences for one national community, the nation or a part of ethnic community. Terrorism comes about as a result of ad hoc activity, it appears and disappears. One of the important characteristics of the terrorism is its unpredictability.

Terrorism has political goals, it sends messages to certain political subjects regarding some compromises, while genocide means destruction of a nation or a part of a nation, execution of heavy physical and psychological injuries, forceful submission to conditions without the possibility for mere bio-physical existence, prevention from prolongation of the species in accordance with the criterion of ethnical affiliation, as well as forced movement of the population known as 'ethnical cleansing' of a certain territory. Both terrorism and genocide use violence and force as the means of action. The terrorism uses limited force and violence, while genocide uses force and violence to the degree of a partial or a total destruction.

The issue of the victim of terrorist violence is not necessarily linked to national affiliation, as opposed to victims of genocide, which targets exclusively members of a certain national or other protected groups.

The postulate which equalizes terrorism and genocide cannot be supported. Terrorism is a support instrument primarily in spreading fear among the population and expelling people from a certain territory, and not from a position of destruction of one ethnical group or community. Terrorism can also be a form of defence similar to guerrilla action, often used by the weak and helpless, which differentiates it from genocide.

Genocide is a very complex social phenomenon which is planned, organized and carried out by a state, a state apparatus or a part of such a state apparatus. Genocide cannot be planned, organized or carried out by an individual and/or a social group over one people/nation or part of the nation – that is always done by forces, organizations and groups backed up by a state or country which fully supports the action.

Conclusion

Considering that terrorism is a very dynamic social phenomenon which can change its content and forms of action, it is possible to notice its relation to the genocide. It can be further concluded that terrorism precedes genocide.

The role of terrorism as a support instrument in carrying out genocide surfaces in form of spreading fear and forced movement or expulsion of the population from a certain territory.

It is important to underline that terrorism and genocide have a common denominator – force and violence.

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Sažetak

Inspiracija za rad i problem(i) koji se radom oslovljava(ju): Naglasiti simbiotičku vezu i ulogu terorizma kao instrumenta za podršku u vršenju genocida u obliku širenja straha i prisilnog iseljavanja ili protjerivanja stanovništva iz određenog područja.

Ciljevi rada (naučni i/ili društveni): Intencija ovog rada jeste pronalaženje povezanosti između terorizma i genocida, te se pokušava naći povezanost između ove dvije globalne pojave koje u zajedničkom nazivniku imaju nasilje, destrukciju i masovni gubitak života.

Metodologija/Dizajn: Autor primjenjuje analitičko-sintetičku, te induktivno-deduktivnu metodu.

Ograničenja istraživanja/rada: Jedna od razlika je u cilju – žrtve terorizma ne vežu se neophodno za određenu nacionalnu grupu/pripadnost, dok je to uvijek slučaj kad se radi o genocidu.

Rezultati/Nalazi: Razmatranje problema definisanja terorizma autor nadopunjuje ukazujući na uočljive greške koje su ometale izgradnju naučne definicije terorizma kao cjeline.

Generalni zaključak: Zaključuje se da terorizam i genocid imaju zajednički nazivnik - političke ciljeve, te oba koriste silu i nasilje.

Opravdanost istraživanja/rada: Autor analizira poteškoće definisanja terorizma, držeći da je ključna teškoća izvodjenja definicije otklonjena ako se poštuju pravila logičkog naučnog definisanja pojave.

Ključne riječi

terorizam, genocid, definisanje, poteškoće, fenomen, nasilje, politički, cilj

About the author

Bakir Alispahic was born in 1956 in Sarajevo. He had worked for the State Security in the Republic Secretariat for the internal affairs of BiH and progressed to the position of the Republic Minister of Internal Affairs. Alispahic was the first Director of the Agency of research and documentation BiH, and he also held the position of Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo, where he also gained his masters degree in security studies, as well as his PhD with the thesis 'Theoretical and methodological aspects of the research of work of the intelligence services'.

He has authored two books, 'Terrorism what is that?' and 'The Methods of work of the intelligence services'.

He is married, father of two children.