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Political Analysis of the Public Statements of the Leaders of Terrorists Groups

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Considering that terrorists' aim is to influence the public conscience in information space, effectiveness of both terrorist and counterterrorism activity largely depends on consideration of features and principles of the latter. That is why the modern radical organizations pay as much attention to the work in mass media and Internet as to the acts of violence. The public statements of terrorists are the weapon in media war. To study them the author proposes to use the methods of political and situation analysis. The research demonstrates that these statements are valuable sources if information and their detailed analysis let us to detect objective and subjective features of terrorists and nontransparent subjects who support them. It concerns, in particular, the compilation of psychological profiles of the leaders of the terrorists groups and determination of the "grows poles", that is not formed, but visible tendencies. Thus, political analysis of the public statements of terrorists lets us to improve the mechanisms of prediction and prevention of terrorist activity which means that it has undoubtful practical importance.

Keywords: political analysis, situation analysis, terrorism, public statements, counterterrorism activity.

In the present time it is undoubtful, that effective countermeasures to terrorist activity are impossible without fundamental and applied research. In order to characterize the systems of methods which are used to study definite political events and political situation in general, prediction of the possible development of the situation and making of the competent politically-motivated decision, the term "political analysis" is used¹.

According to K.V. Simonov, opposed to theoretical politology, political analysis is focused on active participation in the political process as a modifying principle. The object of research

in this case is "problematic situations from the current political practice, which decisions are to be found as soon as possible". The results of the applied research is "perishable" but extremely valuable product, especially in critical cases, when the most important decisions are to be made under conditions of time, informational and other restrictions².

According to A.I. Soloviev, the importance of political analysis as an applied subject lies in the fact that it "formulates the basic requirements for studying the problems, the search of the most suitable decisions and identifies the necessary

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technological equipment and activities, which prevent subjectivity and arbitrary actions"³. K.V. Simonov notes, that political analysis has pyramidal structure: on the basis of situation analysis it also includes political forecasting and procedures of formulation and decision making. Moreover, situation analysis, which studies the condition of the political system and combination of interaction between its subjects in a certain period of time, may also be an independent type of activity.

Tragic, but integral part of the modern political reality is terrorism – a phenomenon, which N.A. Baranov defines as "non-state violent use of force with the aim to spark mass panic in the society, to weaken and even overthrow the government and initiate political changes in the state. It is aimed to destabilize the state regimes, agitation of population's excitement about their defenselessness in the face of violence, change of the government in a country or meeting different political, religious or ethnical requirements'²⁴.

By systematic use of violence, terrorists try to frighten the population and make it panic. Terrorist acts of local and regional scale happen more often during the election period. According to A. Fomin, terrorism can reach maximum efficiency in the democratic countries where the population is involved in the actual election. This method is less effective in countries with authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes, where the election results are known in advance⁵. At the international level, the terrorist forces become agents of change in the global balance of power.

For the most detailed analysis of the situations involving the use of violence for political purposes it is important, above all, to create the necessary conceptual apparatus and to develop the adequate methods of analysis. This raises the question about the methods of the situation analysis, applicable for the investigation of terrorist threats

in terms of the lack of information and time. The analysis of the public statements by the subjects of terrorist activity appears to be one of them. Such statements are intended, as a rule, for the mass audience and can easily influence the situation as a whole, and the interests of the definite political actors. As A.N. Kurbatskii rightly pointed out, the act of terrorism in the modern world is mainly a component of the information war⁶. Regular public statements of the representatives of some terrorist groups proof this fact. Thus, the structure of the "Taliban", along with specialized departments for working with the groups of suicide bombers and units of learning how to create improvised explosive devices, created news agencies such as the studio "Ummat" and "Radio Shariat."

However, the public statements of the terrorists are above price material for the analysis. The spatiotemporal parameters, the external context and location of the speeches within the boundaries of the events, are of particular interest, as the statement of the leader of a terrorist group which became the public domain, as well as any political text, was born under the influence of the complex interacting social factors and due to a number of different circumstances.

Any person acting on behalf of the terrorist organization has a number of objective and subjective qualities, which give his work a certain direction and, at the same time, act as limiting factors. Among the objective factors the following factors should be mentioned first of all: independence or dependence of that person, his/her involvement in certain systems of social relations (such as terrorist networks and contacts with various internal and external political forces and with foreign intelligence services), a person's publicity, status, or absence of such characteristics.

The major limiting factors are: counteraction to the extremists from the authorities, including anti-terrorist units, the number and organization of the forces available to terrorists, the social basis on which they rely and the amount of resources under their control. Terrorists often exaggerate the number of their ranks, but on the basis of the analysis of their statements we can draw conclusions about whether they contain true information about the number of members of an organized network, or they mention only their imaginary "comrades".

Speaking about the subjective limiters we should assume that any person shares certain beliefs (or, at least, have to make show that there is any), has certain skills and doesn't have others (as a rule, not perpetrators but ideologists of terrorist acts make the statements), has certain sibling or other personal connections (sometimes the terrorists want to break them, but often turn it to their advantage) and also has personal abilities and qualities. The latter, in particular, include intellectual (ability to develop an ideology and a plan of action, systematic thinking), psychological (charisma, the ability to suggest), and endurance and stamina, as well as professional skills (including propaganda), etc.

For example, in the study of the public statements of Osama bin Laden it should be noted that from 1986 he took part in at least five major battles, as well as in hundreds of small-scale armed clashes. Afghan period in bin Laden's live was a starting point for his becoming a terrorist. According to his own words, "One day in Afghanistan was worth more than a thousand days of praying in a mosque".

The real motivation of the leader of a terrorist group is important too. Despite the popular belief, motivation can be not only ideological, or psychopathology, but also financial, career but of any origin. If there are no alternative "social elevators" people can build their career in a terrorist network by agreeing to bear the associated risks for the sake of the high

social status, access to finance and the ability to determine the behavior of other people.

One of the main goals of a terrorist act is the psychological impact on individuals who are not direct victims of a certain crime. Let us remember that the word "terror" is literary translated as "horror." The terrorists, carrying out different specific actions – terrorist acts, have the aim to occurrence of this particular emotional state, which, however, without loud public outcry, in most cases can not lead to achieving the goals, declared by the organizers. Often they are used by the terrorists merely to demonstrate their demands and opportunities: usually after the terrorist attack its organizers publicly "take responsibility" for its implementation, announce why it was committed, and set conditions for termination of such actions. Thus, even without reaching the global, ultimate goals, they reach staging or intermediate goals: a terrorist group becomes well-known to the public and "respected" in their circles, people talk about it, it is started to be considered.

For example, the leader of the North Caucasus separatists Doku Umarov, posting a video message on the Internet, took responsibility for organizing the terrorist attack in Domodedovo on 24 January 2011, after that he laid down the conditions for cease of the terrorist activity. He assured that the explosions would be more frequent, and would not cease until the federal forces leave the Caucasus⁸.

The public statements of extremists may contain the ideological background of their terrorist activity. Thus, in his statement, Umarov pointed out that the terrorist attack in Domodedovo was a response to "the crimes of Russia in Caucasus." The terrorist said that he and his colleagues wanted to make the Caucasus "free and Islamic". He also called the federal forces the occupiers and declared his intention to "set the land of Caucasus Muslims free, to

establish law and justice" and promised Russia "the year of blood and tears9".

The terrorists' statements almost always contain threats and accusation to the enemy, as if giving them a moral right to the most brutal actions. An example of this is the following statement: "We, "Islambouli Brigades," declare that our soldiers managed to capture two Russian planes ... Russia continues to kill Muslims. We will not stop until the bloody war stops... We will not stop and going to continue attack the regions with the wrong regimes." 10

Sometimes extremists' statements contain information about obtaining access to the especially dangerous technologies of destruction. For example, in 2002 the leaders of "Al-Qaeda," stated that their terrorist group is close to the creation of a primitive nuclear device¹¹. According to V. Sud, extremist theologists have already have justification for the use of the weapons of mass destruction. If they use it they will say that the terrorists did not mean to kill the innocent people. In April 2001, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi stated that the military operations carried out by "Hamas", "Islamic Jihad", "Fatah" and other terrorist groups, were not intended to kill children, who become victims just accidently¹².

Of course, the statements of the representatives of radical groups may contain disinformation, aimed to mislead law-enforcement authorities. However, this deception may also serve as a source of valuable information that will help to identify those, who pay for a terrorist attack, and other "shadow" ("non-transparent") subjects of the terrorist activity, who are behind the organizers of crimes.

The statements of terrorists can be analyzed from the point of view of psycho-emotional characteristics, "Umarov does not believe in what he says. This estimation is confirmed by unconvincing tone of his voice, wan, often shifted glance, depressed eyes (it looks like he is reading

a prepared text), and many other signs of a forced agreement of Umarov with what he was instructed to speak on camera"¹³. Sometimes, on the basis of the semantic and psychological analysis of the speech we can make conclusions about the truth or falsity of the speaker's statements: "Not denying the fact that Umarov could know something about the preparation of the terrorist attack in Domodedovo, it can be argued that he was not the organizer of the attack. That is why the search and neutralization of the real organizers of this attack should be continued"¹⁴.

The schemes of construction of the images of "enemies" and "friends" in the terrorists' public speeches and statements are very interesting. In particular, the radical Islamists often accuse Muslims, who do not support their struggle, in infidelity ("takfir")15. Many public statements by terrorist leaders are devoted to the actual political aspects of the fight against their opponents who also resort to terrorism. Thus, advocates of the "Al-Qaeda" has repeatedly blamed "Hamas" in being "too gentle", what expressed in negotiations with Israel and the non-observance with the jihad commandments¹⁶. On the other hand, the terrorists can speak favorably about the actions of people with other beliefs and religions in order to expand their social basis¹⁷ or to discredit certain political figures, what is beneficial for those, who "order" these statements.

Often, the terrorist's statements contain ideologemes, which are based on pseudo-historic research and have certain point of view on the "ownership" of definite areas, etc.¹⁸ As a rule, these concepts do not stand any scientific scrutiny. However, the goal of the operational policy analysis is not denial of the myths, but the restoration, with the help of different cues, of a conceptual picture, using which, it is possible to understand the logic of the terrorists and to predict their future actions.

Recently someone Umar Bashkirskyi, who identified himself as the representative of the Mujahedeen of the Urals, asked his Caucasus colleagues to send experts to help organise largescale guerrilla movement. He even developed a mini-program, which described how underground resistance, which main task will be establishment of jihad in the Urals, should be founded. Firstly, Omar suggested the commanders of the "Caucasus Emirate" to send several teams of the well-trained militants to study the situation in the mountains of South Ural, and for "intelligence activities and acts of sabotage." Secondly, he believes it is possible to create "ribats" (military camps) for training new recruits. Thirdly, the author of the letter writes about "military operations of high complexity" under the conditions of constant exchange of experience and "establishment of military-strategic interaction between the Caucasus and the Ural Mujahideens"19. The reaction of the North emirs is still unknown, but, nevertheless, it is possible to say that the terrorists consider the Urals as a possible basis for the manifestation of their activity. The situational analysis of such documents makes it possible not only to determine the direction of the existing political processes, but also to identify the potential "growth poles" - "the tendencies in the political sphere, which has not yet been formed, but already visible"20.

When using the techniques of the political analysis for the study of the public statements of the representatives of the extremists groups, the entire world experience of fighting terrorism and thorough study of not only successful antiterrorist actions, but also the mistakes which were made, should be taken into account. For example, despite the fact that the Europeans live side by side with terrorism since the XIX century, (especially rich in acts of terrorism was the period of the late 60s - mid 80s of last century), the majority of Europeans (55%) hold the opinion that, that the

U.S. policy has greatly contributed to the tragedy of September 11 and is indirectly responsible for it. The U.S. investments and training of Bin Laden and his Mujahedeens in the '80s, providing multi-billion dollars aid to Israel and the war in Iraq gave stimulus to the emergence of a strong terrorist movement in the Middle East. This, in turn, led to fact that the war now is conducted not by the big armies of the fighting states, but by the "special forces" that create, according to what George Orwell said in 1984, "the special psychological climate and keep the structures of the society intact." In other words, in this case we deal with a confrontation between the two types of organizations, two different types of relationships – formal and informal. Even now, when the Islamic terrorists have become a serious political force that represents a threat to the West. they are considered by some Americans (such as von Bulow) as "useful idiots", which used by high-ranking persons of the USA to establish world hegemony21.

Some analysts and officials claim that in the politicization of the clergy of Afghanistan - a trend that began in the 70s and still continues today – the Americans themselves is partly to blame. In the rural areas, where the presence of the government is little or there is no presence of government at all, and the only way to get an education – is to educate in the madrasas, the religious preachers may have great influence, especially when the tribal leaders lost their authority. Unpopular actions of the NATO forces, such as night raids, pushed some imams to encourage the members of their congregations to take part in jihad. The maulvis and the mullahs are political now," an Afghan official says. "They're telling people, 'If you kill someone, you'll go to paradise.' At the same time, killing people by "the Taliban" is less likely to cause strong emotions, than the violence committed by the NATO forces, in which local people see the occupants. Even those who support

the presence of the NATO troops are less tolerant to them²².

D. Galkovsky points at two important factors that determine the face of the modern terrorism. Firstly, a lot of things depend on the level of operations. If an enemy soldier is killed in the occupation zone, it is important for the propaganda purposes, to indicate that he was killed by a saboteur or a member of the local resistance movement. But when it comes to destroying the capital of the neighboring state as a result of thermonuclear explosion, and especially in the peace time, in this case, attribution of the authorship will not add anything to the stunning effect, and in the most cases it will be even harmful. Secondly, under condition of the hyper-information awareness of the modern society, the terrorist technologies should be considered not only as military and economic, but as psychological and emotional impacts. Figuratively speaking, the modern acts of terror are akin to the chess moves, and not the slaps in boxing. The indirect effects of terrorist attacks or even double-triple combinations in multidirectional actions are of great importance²³. We should also remember about the characteristic features of the political struggle, where terrorism is its part, that the political struggle has many moves and many layers. Without this understanding short-sighted and irresponsible actions of politicians may have very unpredictable and dire consequences.

Speaking about the modern phase of terrorism, it should be mentioned that very often it is ideologically linked to Islamic fundamentalism, which sometimes incredibly combines the archaic basis and tendency for assimilation of the new products of scientific and technological progress. According to the researchers, "Radical Islam – not a phenomenon of the Middle Ages and not peculiar to that period simplicity. This is postmodern ideology that can inspire different

social groups. It uses the modern means of information and communication platforms, and positions itself as an alternative form of life, the most attractive for those who are dissatisfied with the existing social reality²⁴."

The use of the advanced information technologies by the Islamic radicals began even before the Internet appeared. The cassette tapes were used In Iran for the distribution of the messages of Ayatollah Khomeini and their copies were not expensive²⁵. The appearance of the Internet had an enormous influence on the global jihad, creating the possibility of relationship between an individual and the virtual community.

The global computer network is important to the terrorists. For example, it can be useful for the dissemination of disinformation and threats to make people afraid and feel helplessness, and for showing shocking documentary evidence of their actions. The example of this may be placed on several web sites recording of the execution of American journalist Daniel Pearl²⁶.

The Internet is also used by the members of the terrorist groups to communicate with the perpetrators of terrorist acts and coordinate their supporters. It is paradoxical, but the development of the Internet, which gave the ruling elites the unique opportunity to manipulate public opinion, significantly influenced the effectiveness and mass character of the acts of protests. According to I.L. Morozov, an international stratum of protesting youth has formed nowadays. These young people follow the leaders of the developed countries and the largest international corporations around the world, easily organise actions of protest in the USA, the Czech Republic and Australia. As a rule, these people are from the wealthy, though not from the reachest families. They can follow the political and economic changes in the world, coordinate and correct their actions and concentrate power at the right time in the right place of the world with the help of the specialized sites and informational mailings.²⁷

Islamists from the "Al-Qaeda" successfully combines multimedia resources, propaganda, and innovative communication tools to create a complex model of psychological war. Osama bin Laden and his followers pay a lot of attention to PR-actions on the Internet, where the visitors of the multiple sites of "Al Qaeda" and "sympathizing" not forbidden organizations can get access to audio and video recordings, photos and advertisements. Despite the constant pursuit, arrests and deaths of many members, the destruction of its operational bases and training camps in Afghanistan, "Al-Qaeda" is able to conduct a campaign to make people panic. Since 11 September 2001 the organization has consistently placed on their websites reports about planning the "big attacks" on the targets in America. These warnings were widespread in the press and it lead to the feeling of fear and insecurity in the hearts of people around the world, and especially in the United States²⁸.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the terrorist groups on their Web sites do not display their acts of violence. Instead, regardless the programmes of the terrorists, their motives and location, a lot of sites are concentrated on two problems: restrictions of the freedom of expression and difficult position of their companionsin-arms, who are political prisoners²⁹. The reports of the terrorists on the Internet have a powerful response among the supporters of the extremists, they are also made to make a bid for sympathy from the Western audiences, which cherish the ideas of pluralism and tolerance and disapprove the attempts to make the political opposition keep silence. The target audience for the statements which contain such complaints may be even representatives of the enemy camp, because terrorists, making emphasis on the anti-democratic actions taken against them, try

to instill a sense of embarrassment and shame among their enemies. According to G. Weyman, on the Internet, which for many users is a symbol of freedom and uncensored communication, the expression of the protest of the banned terrorist groups has a special effect³⁰.

However, experience has shown possibility of successful countermeasures to the terrorists in the sphere of information technologies. For example, recently, it becomes more difficult for terrorists to use satellite phones and alike equipment. As a result, communication with the headquarters is broken, and the global jihad may come back to the plots on the organization of local operations without support from the "center"31. The documents which were found in computers confiscated from terrorists played an important role in condemning the terrorists, for example, in trials over Abdul Aziz (Imam Samudra) in New York, who was accused in the bombing of the U.S. embassies in the East Africa and in Indonesia. This fact gives basis to suppose that suitable information and propaganda against distribution of the terrorists' statements may be quite effective.

According to A.A. and Al.A. Nurullayevs, the exceptional cruelty displayed by the terrorists and typical for them negligence to the local customs and traditions tend to deprive them of the support of the masses, including people with the same religion, which the leaders of the extremist groups claim to believe in³². However, disorder in the life of millions of people, mass unemployment, anger, frustration caused by the unsatisfaction with the basic needs (safety, identity, recognition, etc.) and other consequences of the acute systemic crisis faced by Russia and others former Soviet republics, apparently, for a long time will be a source of religious and political extremism, which is characterized by the desire for the rapid solution of the complex problems, regardless of the "price" that has to be paid for it³³.

According to the observations of the psychologists, "at certain times and not always the worst (let's remember Germany in the 70s, which was so dissimilar to Russia is to the 90-s), so-called contagium may be created, that is mental and emotional atmosphere which contribute to terrorism ... At that time motivation of proto-terrorist behavior is increasing. It is not worth emphasizing that atmosphere at that time is quite depressing and all that contribute to all the forms and types of terrorism. Melodies of the "criminal tango" sound louder at all the levels of social relations ... "34. According to A. Eskin, shots and bursts of automatic fire have become the familiar background sound for the citizens of Dagestan, and all the major Russian cities have a division of the radical Wahhabi. Not long ago, in Tyumen, died a Caucasian who was making a bomb for a terrorist act³⁵. According

to this researcher, "a pessimistic case scenario will begin with a gradual rejection of the North Caucasus from Russia, and then – migration of the most part of the population of this region to Moscow and other major cities as a result of war and poverty. Together with that, separatist tendencies in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and the other autonomous republics and regions will become intensified³⁶.

The systematic study of the phenomenon of terrorism and religious and political persuasion, the monitoring of its manifestations and development of the effective methods of resistance are considered to be of vital importance. The political analysis of the public statements of terrorists makes it possible to improve the mechanisms of prediction and prevention of the terrorist activity, and thus has a direct practical importance.

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- 27 Вейман Г. Как современные террористы используют Интернет // http://nak.fsb.ru/nac/ter_org.htm!id=10284591@ cmsArticle&_print=true.html
- ²⁸ See: Морозов И.Л. [Могоzov I.L.] Политический экстремизм леворадикальные течения. Учебное пособие для студентов и аспирантов. Волжский, Издательство ВФ МЭИ, 2002. С 45. On 18 June 1999, on the day of the summit of «Big Eight» left-wing radical youth, having coordinated their actions on the Internet, arranged simultaneous action in all the major European capitals, which can be compared to the «student revolution» in 1968. See: Ibidem.
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- The report from Dhaka on the website AsiaNews says: "During the arrests of the Mujahideen from JMB, in addition to the promotional materials in support of jihad, weapons, explosives and computers were found. In one of the leaflets fundamentalists accuse that the media which are controlled by the Christians, represent the noble mujahideen campaign to set the country free from the infidels in the wrong way. They promise to throw all the enemies of Allah and corrupted political leaders out, and establish an Islamic state." Банерджи И. [Ванегфі І.] Радикальный ислам в Бангладеш, Непале и на Мальдивских островах // Радикальный ислам: взгляд из Индии и России / Под редакцией Сергея Кургиняна и Викрама Суда. М.: МОФ-ЭТЦ, 2010. С. 469.
- 31 See: Veiman G. Ibidem
- Unprofessionalism of the explosions on 16 May 2003 in Casablanca (where the bombers were lost on the way to their targets), probably indicates a new state of the global jihad, which, perhaps, is deprived of a considerable part of its communication canacity.
- 333 See.: Нуруллаев А.А., Нуруллаев Ал. А. [Nurullayev A.A., Nurullayev Al.A.] Религиозно-политический экстремизм // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Сер.: Политология. 2003. № 4 С. 87.
- 34 See: Ibidem. P. 92.
- 35 Психологи о терроризме («круглый стол») [Physiologists about terrorism (round table discussion)]// Психологический журнал. Т. 16. 1995. № 4. С. 48.
- ³⁶ See: Эскин А. [Eskin A.] Взгляд из Сиона: поддержать Россию http://www.avigdor-eskin.com/page. php3?page=6&item=456
- 37 Ibidem.

Политический анализ публичных заявлений лидеров террористических групп

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Поскольку целью террористов является воздействие на общественное сознание, осуществляемое в информационном пространстве, эффективность как террористической, так и контртеррористической деятельности во многом зависит от степени учета свойств и закономерностей последнего. Именно поэтому современные радикальные организации уделяют работе в сфере масс-медиа и сети Интернет не меньше внимания, чем

осуществлению насильственных действий. Публичные заявления террористов являются оружием в информационной войне. Для их изучения автор предлагает использовать методы политического и ситуационного анализа. В статье демонстрируется, что эти выступления являются ценными источниками информации, всестороннее исследование которых позволяет выявить объективные и субъективные черты террористов и стоящих за ними нетранспарентных субъектов. Речь идет, в частности, о составлении психологических портретов лидеров террористических групп, а также об определении «полюсов роста», то есть еще не сформировавшихся, но уже просматривающихся тенденций. Таким образом, политический анализ публичных заявлений террористов позволяет совершенствовать механизмы прогнозирования и предотвращения террористической деятельности, а значит, имеет непосредственное практическое значение.

Ключевые слова: политический анализ, ситуационный анализ, терроризм, публичные выступления, контртеррористическая деятельность.