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“Soft Power” and “Smart Power” in the Process of Counter-Terrorist Operation

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The article is devoted to the transformation of the terrorist organizations in present-day conditions and new methods of combating terrorism, successfully proven in areas such as PR, business, sociology and psychology. Professionalism of terrorist organizations, the development of new fields of action - such as mass media, Internet, and even clothing styles are demonstrated. In this regard, the author suggests expanding the forms and counterterrorism methods significantly. Above all, the author dwells upon the technology of “smart power” which uses “soft” and “hard” power based on the situation. Such flexible, but effective approaches can improve the effectiveness of traditional anti-terrorist operations, or can be used on their own. In conclusion, a number of specific recommendations is given which include a more active involvement of the public, making up “mental maps” of terrorists, defamatory campaign against organizations which explode bombs, etc.

Keywords: terrorism, extremism, international security, international terrorism, “smart power”, “soft power”, public policy, extremism.

I

The world has changed significantly since the disintegration of USSA. After destroying the bipolar system of equilibrium, some forces, which had had some importance in the past, but still remained on the sidelines, became global geopolitical players. Some of them tend to occupy a leading position, and simultaneously treating a Russia as a serious competitor, try to push her out of the world politics.

In such difficult conditions is it particularly important to study the tactics and the use of “smart power”, which alternates between two forms of

political action (influence of the reaction) – “soft” and “hard power” depending on the situation. Unfortunately, the powerful potential of this approach in our country remains highly unclaimed. Meanwhile, the tactic of “smart power” allows us to respond flexibly to the changing realities of foreign policy and protect the interests of Russia, while avoiding unnecessary conflict and consolidating forces from neighboring countries, strengthening relations with traditional allies, and acquiring new ones.

The vectors of Russian foreign policy have been identified by Vladimir V. Putin in his project

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of creating a new form of integration with former Soviet republics—the Eurasian Union. The essence of the latter he defined as “a model of powerful supranational union, which is able to become one of the poles of the modern world and to play the role of an effective “binding” between Europe and a dynamic Asia-Pacific region.”¹ An effective application of “smart power” may contribute to the implementation of these priorities, and ensure the security of the country.

The issue of safety has not been raised by chance. There are forces that find unprofitable to consolidate Russia’s foreign policy positions and strengthen its economic impact. To achieve their ambitious plans, these entities use both legal and “shadow” methods. International terrorism is increasingly being used as such a method.

It’s no secret that Islamic fundamentalism is currently the most dynamic and fast-growing figure in international politics. Its adherents express their will for world domination more often and more loudly. However, many of them do not see anything wrong in building a global caliphate with extremist methods.

These methods and their implications are well known in our country, as well as the fact that the process of changing of the Caucasus region into the cradle of international terrorism is directly linked to the fact that religious centers in Central Asia have become under control of foreign radical Islamists.²

Political regimes in Kazakhstan and Central Asian states are secular in nature. However, a major part of the population of these countries professes Islam to some extent. Many adherents of this religion live in Russia. In this regard, holding the interests of our state, it is important to avoid an escalation of tensions in relations with the Islamic world. Religious conflicts can hinder integration and create the most unpredictable consequences.

II

Speaking about the current state of global terrorism, it should be noted that the qualitative composition of the organizations, practitioners of extremism, is now significantly different from the picture, which can be seen 30-40 years ago. Previously, the leaders of radical groups have paid attention only to the devotion to the idea, their belief in the validity of the use of violence and their willingness to die while training of rank-and-file members (the perpetrators of terrorist acts). Today, these qualities are necessary but not sufficient for successful implementation of the terrorists to achieve their goals. This trend is confirmed by the studies conducted by the experts in this field.

In 1972, a psychologist B.J. Berkowitz singled out and described the psychological types of people, who constitute the greatest threat to use weapons of mass destruction. He included paranoid, paranoid schizophrenic and borderline mentally retarded and schizophrenic types in the “risk group”. But as for the most likely “candidates for the terrorists”, the writer considered to be sociopaths.³

Currently, not all the colleagues of B.J. Berkowitz share this point of view. Scientists recognize that some schizophrenics and sociopaths dream of extermination of the population. But the actions of this category of citizens can hardly achieve the required result. The reason is simple: a large-scale dissemination of chemical, biological, or radiological agents requires considerable and well-coordinated efforts of an entire group of people. However, it is often difficult for schizophrenics to communicate in any kind of groups and sociopaths are pathologically unable to cooperate, even within their peer groups.

As pointed out by E. O’Ballens, a “successful” terrorist should perform an initiation rite accepted in the group and prove his qualities such as courage, absolute loyalty to the leader of

the movement and the absolute lack of pity and compassion for the victims of terrorism (including innocent people, women and children). But beyond this, one requires the intelligence, high enough for collecting and analyzing the relevant information, planning and implementation of complex transactions, and conspiracy. A good education is also of great importance (university degree is almost obligatory.) The latter implies in particular proficiency in foreign languages.⁴

To create or acquire, to get ready for the application and set into action some complex mechanisms, which include not only weapons of mass destruction, but also many examples of modern weapons, a terrorist should require special knowledge and skills. The latter are only typical for people who have professional education. It is a well-known fact for leaders of the terrorist community and the majority of them are highly educated. Since 1990 specialists in different fields of science and technology have started playing a leading role among the organizers and perpetrators of terrorist operations. Education and professionalism clearly distinguish them from terrorist commandos of 1960-70s., who had only simple skills acquired in conventional training camps. Osama bin Laden paid particular attention to recruiting his terrorist network by highly qualified specialists in the field of medicine, chemistry, physics, programming, telecommunications, etc.⁵

III

As a rule, terrorists have become socially excluded people. Those who have a low level of education (such as young people from the Algerian ghettos or the Gaza Strip) can join a terrorist group to make their seemingly boring existence diverse and varied and to have fun, even in such an extraordinary way. Some of them may be primarily motivated by a desire to put into practice some specific skills, such as an

ability to create self-made explosive devices. As a rule, better-educated young people are on this path, guided, by political or religious views.

A system of education may be some kind of nutrient medium for terrorism. For example, in religious schools in Pakistan "the basics, which is taught to boys is the knowledge of the Koran by heart in Arabic and the ability to recite rhythmically its 144 chapters (the boys are admitted to madrasahs at the age of 6). It takes ten years. Except for the Koran, a graduate of madrasah knows a little at 16: the earth is flat, Islam is the only true religion, and America, India and Israel are his deadly enemies. (According only to official figures, there are about 13,500 such kind of educational institutions in Pakistan, but some unofficial sources claim the existence of nearly 40 thousands of madrasahs)". "Such a pattern is typical for people not only this state, but some other countries as well, in particular, neighboring Afghanistan, where such education is often the only affordable for its citizens.

Young people, who become terrorists in Western countries, seek for some spiritual needs, being unable to find the answer in their close society. It is noteworthy that many of them have an intellectual level that is above the average one. It's typical for the 'western' terrorists to have disillusionment with traditional social and religious institutions. For example, J. Becker characterized the West German left-wing radical terrorist organization RAF as "children without fathers." They despised his parents and rebelled against them, unwilling to forgive them the shame of Nazism and the defeat of Germany.⁷

Many future members of terrorist groups begin as sympathizers. Newcomers are often drawn from the various "promotion organizations" such as community support for prisoners and student activist groups. A kind of recruiting chain is made: an attentive listener – an interested interlocutor – a sympathizing well-wisher – a

passive supporter. It is much easier to persuade the latter one to actually commit extremist and terrorist activities rather than people "from outside", who are not prepared psychologically and ideologically.

The circumstances, under which people are already on the verge of social exclusion, join a terrorist group, may vary. Sometimes a person becomes a terrorist due to the gradual "inculcation" in the extremist environment. A family member or close friend who has ties to terrorists often helps him doing it. Sometimes this process is accelerated by the violent conflicts with the police or other security forces.

IV

Another feature of modern terrorism is an active involvement of new members. A full range of available media, communications and advocacy is used. Having mastered all the subtleties of influence on people's consciousness and the influence of "public relations" technology on the population in all its minutest details, terrorists perfectly alternated their actions based on the psychological pressure and intimidation, trying to portray themselves and their activities in the most favorable light for potential supporters. Let us consider a number of successful PR-projects carried out by terrorists and their supporters in recent years.

Mastering the Internet, supporters of terrorism have created a large number of sites preaching radical ideas. One of the typical examples of these resources is the online edition of "Inspire", whose target audience consists of young English-speaking Muslims living in Europe and America. The creator of the magazine is Samir Khan, born in Saudi Arabia, but grew up in the U.S. so he has U.S. citizenship. Even when he was a teenager, he became active in several Islamic groups. Samir Khan holds a situation under control and has extensive experience in

the Internet. He is not difficult to find common language with the target audience. Taking into account the psychological characteristics of 20-25-year-olds who prefer vigorous actions to philosophical reflection, the publication focuses its attention not on theology but on calls for action. In addition to anti-American slogans, the site includes practical instructions for the creating and using of self-made explosive devices. Strengthening the Muslims in the pursuit of jihad, inspiring them to radical ideas and inspiring them to fight with Western society, "Inspire" has become an effective part of a complex and extensive campaign of al-Qaeda.⁸

Another example of successful application of "soft power" with Islamic methods may result from the field of fashion. Several years ago it became fashionable for some members of youth subcultures to wear an Arab scarf called keffiyeh, colloquially referred to as "arafatka" (on behalf of PLO leader Yasser Arafat), which became a symbol of Palestinian extremists even in the 1970s. This trend was reflected in the collections of famous fashion designers. Traditional Afghan headwear "pakul" has become popular in a similar way. It is significant that this occurred in a while after the terrorists' acts that shocked the world in September 11, 2001. Having played on the desire of the youth to stand out of the crowd, the Islamist propagandists offered their own version of "a slap in the face to the public taste."⁹

Speaking about the work of radical groups on the "image appeal" of their members, it should be mentioned an example of the Chechen fighters who fought on their side of the Arab mercenaries. Beards, camouflage and a Kalashnikov rifle quite corresponded to the image of Cuban revolutionaries, including Che Guevara, whose image is a symbol of resistance to global capitalism for supporters of the left-wing political theories. Western media have played an important role in creating a romantic aureole surrounding the North

Caucasian separatists, and in depicting them as fighters for independence forced to combat for the freedom of their motherland.¹⁰

However, there are cases of terrorist propaganda of "hard power". As examples of "hard power" may be given a "cartoon scandal" in 2005-2006, triggered by the publication of satirical portraits of Muhammad in a Danish newspaper "Jyllands-Posten", threats to the creators of the animated series "South Park", which took liberties of Muslims, and a murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004 for releasing his short film about Muslim women, "Submission".¹¹

Considering only a few elements of an expanded and many-sided system of extremist propaganda, we should admit that it is high time to develop an effective program for state countermeasures. That is why we should take into account both the qualitative changes in the terrorist community, as well as factors leading enlisting of new "recruits".

V

The last years have revealed that despite involving a large number of forces and arms, the effectiveness of military counter-terrorist operations is often lower than expected. They cost a lot (in terms of both material costs and human costs) and do not always bring the desired results. Such events are important in most cases when terrorists are made to apply force, and it is impossible to avoid open conflict.

Preventive measures of using force are rarely justified for several reasons. Firstly, they cause a negative reaction from citizens who are not involved in terrorist activities, but came under suspicion or have suffered any damages as a result of special operations. Secondly, the "clean-up operations" with using weapons, cannot but infringe the interests of civilians in some form or other due to their scale and violent nature. Thirdly,

and shown by lots of good examples, those against whom they are directed such operations have accumulated extensive experience in combat, and also have learned how to use them for propaganda purposes. Terrorists treat the killed accomplices as saints who fought for the idea, and detainees and convicts as prisoners of conscience.

Statistics results that most terrorist groups do not stop their activities when faced with a military confrontation. Moreover, some of them manage to reach their goals. Examples include the "Irgun Zevai Leumi" (from Hebrew: "National Military Organization in the Land of Israel") in Israel, Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston, or EOKA (from Greek -National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) in Cyprus and the Front de Libération Nationale, or FLN ("National Liberation Front") in Algeria¹². Bruce Hoffman, far from a radical academic, grudgingly admits that "Although governments throughout history and all over the world always claim that terrorism is ineffective as an instrument of political change, the examples of Israel, Cyprus, and Algeria . . . provide convincing evidence to the contrary". According to Hoffman, B.: "While governments throughout history and around the world have always argued that terrorism is ineffective as an instrument of political change, the example of Israel, Cyprus and Algeria, we find convincing evidence to the contrary."¹³

There are cases when a terrorist group goes to the non-violent tactics and is included in the peaceful political process. Sometimes law enforcement authorities can arrest or physically destroy its leaders. In case when the extremists have some constructive aims, a peaceful resolution of conflict may be possible. And only when there is no basis for dialogue and opportunities for the incorporation of members of radical organizations in civilian life, the most effective method of protection is the elimination of such groups.

Taking into account that even successful law enforcement counter-terror operations often lead to undesirable side effects, it is important to turn the weapons against the ideologists of terrorism. It's necessary to play on the field, where they have been total victors, having met no decent resistance yet. It is important to study the experience of combat, gained by law enforcement agencies around the world, and the experience of the terrorists themselves, as reflected in their policy statements, internal documents, confessions, memories, etc. A comprehensive analysis of this rich material will allow drawing serious lessons from it and developing new "soft", but efficient methods of combating extremism and terrorism. It has already been mentioned above about the high cost, lack of efficiency and undesirable side effects of military operations. One should also take into account the gospel truth, valid for all times and countries: it's much easier and effective to prevent committing an atrocity and forestall bloodshed, counteracting the criminals still at the stage of conception and planning of their illegal actions.

Such an approach implies a fundamental change in the ending a "war" against terrorism and a transition to a new stage, the essence of which is reflected by the term "counter terrorism", which is used by most governments, faced with the problem of terrorism. The shift of military terminology into almost a "civil" one has a great symbolic significance. Even Donald Rumsfeld, a former U.S. Secretary of Defense, had serious reasons to worry about using the term "war on terror" because he believed that the word "war" led people to emphasize the importance of the military component of this multidimensional confrontation.¹⁴In addition, extremists often use the expression "war on terror" in their propaganda, claiming that the West led by the United States is waging war against the entire

Islamic world, which means that the reaction of Muslims must be jihad.

VI

A concept of "smart power" suggests a more active use of techniques in counter-terrorism, used in "public relations" (PR). If we consider the latter as "a system of information-analytical and procedural and technological activities aimed at harmonizing the relationships within a project, as well as between the members of the project and its external environment for the successful implementation of this project,"¹⁵and if by "harmonizing relationships" we understand the consistency of measures taken, if we imply "certain project" as counter-terrorism activities, and "external environment" as the country's population, so the methods used by experts in this field, can be successfully used to perform various tasks in antiterrorist operations.

International political experience, including an experience in combating terrorism, contains many examples of effective use of methods of interaction with the public. For example, FBI decided to ask for help from the leaders of Islamic organizations to change the negative attitude towards the leadership of the Bureau as the majority of American Muslim community considers FBI a powerful and omniscient government agency designed to "punish the Muslims". Nevertheless, the heads of the FBI have made this approach an important part of its counterterrorism strategy in spite of the fact that most American Muslims are not in the U.S. religious organizations, or are part of small communities in the mosques, and almost all the associations, with rare exceptions, are related with the "Muslim Brotherhood", at least ideologically. Such solutions have shown their effectiveness. FBI director Robert Mueller has stated in congressional testimony "We now have partners in the Arab-American

and Muslim communities. Some have become publicly declared allies in our efforts to condemn terrorism. They have become our bridge to many who viewed the FBI with either contempt, or worse, fear"¹⁶

Another positive example is a multi-faceted, multi-year strategy of combating extremism aimed at discrediting terrorist ideology, as a result of it was created The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). It comprises Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Burkina Faso. The main objectives of the organization are strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities and enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces. The emphasis of TSCTP is not only holding military special operations but it's on preserving the traditional tolerance and moderation displayed in most African Muslim communities and countering the development of extremism, particularly in youth and rural populations, so it's against all the attempts to "Al Qaeda" and other similar organizations to extend the radical ideology among traditionally moderate Muslim populations of the region.¹⁷

Researches in the field of sociology and mass psychology provide a scientific basis for competent counter extremism and terrorism. In the late 1960s, F. Emery, an Australian psychologist, studied a specific social behavior of young people at rock festivals (particularly at the famous festival at Woodstock). As a result of long observation the researcher concluded that this activity resembles bees swarming. Scientists have even introduced a special term, "adolescence swarming" and found out the connection between this phenomenon and the so-called "hysterical rebellion." Moreover, he came to conclusion that such a "swarm" can be effectively managed for political purposes, including the organization of coups.¹⁸

Several decades later, the fruits of F. Emery's research, supplemented with the advances in communications, have been used by the organizers of so-called "color revolutions." Using a mobile phone and sending messages, experienced facilitators guided "revolutionary" masses, leading them to the right direction, instantly correcting the behavior of different groups and thus ensuring coherence. ¹⁹ Anti-globalists use modern methods of early warning for carrying out their actions. These technologies form the basis of a recent practice of "flash mobs" which arise spontaneously and, as a rule, are senseless mass performances. Time, place, and scenario are sent to their members through the Internet or the mobile phone.

VII

Of all the variety of PR-technologies that can enhance the effectiveness of anti-terrorist measures, there are several that can be the most effective.

1. Conducting a campaign to discredit a terrorist organization.

Participation in a terrorist group gives its members a sense of being chosen; it is associated with a peculiar prestige that attracts newcomers. Conducting public campaigns, discrediting such communities, can reduce the attractiveness of their membership in the eyes of potential candidates, thus reducing the quantity and the quality of the radical organizations. For example, the demonstration of differences in financial position between its leaders and rank-and-file members may sober down people who want to join the extremist group.

2. Information security.

Ignoring a terrorist group with the media, non-proliferation of extremist statements reduces to zero all the efforts of radicals to influence a political situation. Their activities do not achieve the desired effect without public

coverage and, by and large, does not make sense. However, the steps in this direction should be very careful and thoughtful, not to provoke further terrorist attacks. In addition, it should be noted that the current level of growth in communication makes almost any information message available to numerous people without applying for "traditional" media.

3. Creating "negative image" of terrorists in the information space.

It is about spreading information through the media, and through informal channels of communication, making terrorists live in a constant state of fear and paranoia, constantly experiencing severe psychological pressure.

4. An active involvement of the police into anti-terrorist campaigns.

Police officers (in the first place, district inspectors) can sometimes get more information about the actions of terrorist groups, operating in the territory under their control, its movements, plans, and upcoming operations than the representatives of military intelligence. In addition, they are much more aware of the operational situation in the area and may have some valuable information.

5. The formation of an integrated model of a criminal act of terrorism (bombing, hostage taking, etc.), through its comprehensive analysis.

"Mental maps" (or mind maps), widely used in business development strategies for the formation of companies, can be taken for this purpose as well. This technique will help to understand the extremists better, to reveal their true motives and intentions. On this basis, it is possible to predict future developments and choose the best methods of resistance.

6. Attracting general population to cooperation.

A key factor in the success of the anti-terrorist operation is to support the population. We should agree that "Those, who can seize the

initiative in dealing with civilians, get a chance of dominating in the situation, and eventually of winning a victory. The leading role of this factor clearly shows that it's impossible to deal effectively with the rebels while using traditional methods, primarily the use of conventional weapons and tactics of the general purpose forces. Therefore, <...> the main role should be led to nonviolent control and subjugation of civilians in order to lose the strength of the rebel forces. In this regard information and psychological warfare are the main elements there. "²⁰

7. Involving members of public authority.

We can derive a great benefit from participation of people, whose opinion has great weight in society, in counter-terrorism. We are talking about well-known figures of culture, science and art, respected people, the elders, etc. Their public speech and appeals, as well as their participation in informal meetings can help to reduce social tension and conflict that may cause terrorism and extremism.

VIII

In summary, we can draw some conclusions. A rapidly changing political reality requires a more flexible decision-making, high competence in various fields and an ability to keep an eye on the many factors that may influence the development of the situation. Only with these qualities, you can count on successful participation in a global geopolitical game.

Eliminating the threat of terrorism is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. The most dangerous form of terrorism is international terrorism, which in fact represents a global extremist underground, having a complex and branched structure, as well as a kind of terrorism, trying to use weapons of mass destruction in achieving their goals. A wide range of methods, successfully applied in areas such as PR, business, sociology and

psychology, should be used to counteract the terrorists.

Attention should be also drawn to the latest developments and adopting the techniques used in various fields of human activity. New approaches, extensively using "soft" but effective action, allow us to improve the effectiveness of military operations, and also can be used as separate forms of counter-terrorism. In many cases, methods of "soft power" are much more productive than their hard options, the response to which can cause a wave of terrorist activity.

It is important to emphasize that the set tasks are doomed to failure without the close cooperation of the armed forces and intelligence agencies with representatives of different sectors of civil society. In contrast, coordinated and cooperative action of these parties can create real barriers to the spread of terrorism. A detailed program of action, providing a possibility of combat and special operations, and various methods of "non-violent" resistance, should be developed and adopted to perform for the most effective counter-terrorism.

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“Soft power” и “smart power” в процессе ведения контртеррористических операций

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Статья посвящена трансформации террористических организаций в современных условиях и новым методам противодействия терроризму, успешно апробированным в таких сферах, как PR, бизнес, социология и психология. Демонстрируются профессионализация террористических сообществ, освоение ими новых полей действия – таких, как сфера масс-медиа, Интернет и даже стили одежды. В этой связи автор предлагает существенно расширить формы и методы контртеррористической деятельности. Речь идет, прежде всего, о технологии “smart power”, чередующей, в зависимости от ситуации, “мягкую” и “жесткую” силу. Эти более гибкие, но при этом эффективные подходы могут как повышать эффективность традиционных контртеррористических операций, так и применяться самостоятельно. В завершении статьи приводится ряд конкретных рекомендаций. В их числе более активное привлечение общественности, составление “ментальных карт” террористов, диффамационные кампании против подрывных организаций и т.д.

Ключевые слова: терроризм, экстремизм, международная безопасность, международный терроризм, “smart power”, “soft power”, государственная политика, экстремизм.
