ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY Military Science PhD School

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# THE ROOT CAUSES OF RECENT MUSLIM TERRORISM AND OUR POSSIBILITIES TO PUSH IT BACK

### PHD DISSERTATION

# **Author's summary**

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### INTRODUCTION

"We have slain a large dragon. But we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of." (R. James Woolsey, former CIA DCI)<sup>1</sup>

The end of the bipolar world order resulted great changes in the international security environment. While the danger of the worldwide armed conflicts has been reduced significantly, new type of threats have emerged and old type of problems have revived that has caused continous and longlasting insecurity in the world equally in national, regional and global level.

Alongside the military elements of the international security there have come to the front also the political, economical, social and environmental dimensions which has formed the base of the new type of security risks, challenges and threats. These are primarily the international migration, the organized crime, the international terrorism, the illegal arms trade and the religional/ethnical conflicts.

### Scientific thesis statement

Out of the new type of security risks, challenges and threats especially the radical and violent form of threats represent serious direct danger to the democratic societies. Even out of them emerges the phenomenon of terrorism of which fourth modern wave<sup>2</sup> the muslim radicalism is one of the greatest challenge of our era.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> WOOLSEY, R. James R. James Woolsey, in testimony before the SSCI, 2 February 1993, just before his installation as DCI. The colorful metaphor provided a "sound-bite" justification for his view that substantial intelligence resources were still needed in the post-Cold War era. In: https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/directors-of-central-intelligence-as-leaders-of-the-u-s-intelligence-community/chapter 12.htm, 2006. 11. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> According to Rapoport, waves of modern terrorism were generated first by the anarchist movement in the late nineteenth century; second by the anticolonial movement in the 1920s; third by the radical ideas of the "New Left" in the 1960s; and finally we are now witnessing a new gathering movement: the "Fourth Wave", which began with the Iranian revolution of 1979. CRONIN, Audrey Kurth: Attacking Terrorism In: Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., 2004., p. 5.

The advance of the radical interpretation of Islam fundamental ideology and the terrorismrelated methods constitutes an urgent and essential problem to be solved for the world but especially for the western-type societies. This muslim terrorism fuelled by religous radicalism and anti-western ideologies endangers the social-economical pillars of the western-type of democracies all over the world. The real danger is not their current power that is quite week for the the time beeing but and their potential to create massbase by mobilize and jihadize the 1,3 billion muslims. Their intention to possess ABC weapons and to use them against the western world makes this danger extremely important to deal with.

My thesis statement it that we have to find the root causes of this problem. Having identified the nature, the elements and the specifics of this phenomenon we have to find an adequate answer to diminish or to push back this growing threat.

### **Goal of research**

In my paper I discover the root causes of the the muslim terrorism and work out a feasible and effective idea to deal with it.

In the first part of my dissertation I present a basic knowlege about the development of the radical Islam-related ideologies and its representatives. With the help of parallel historical events I prove that radical groups grow out of a wider social movement. I identify the main stages of the islamic social movement and point out those causes that have resulted the forming of militant islamic groups.

*In the second part of my dissertation* based on my first part findings I draw a picture of a possible and feasible strategy that intends to reduce the muslim terrorism phenomenon from the today social-political level to a simple law-enforcement related problem. In this part I prove that even if we can not destroy all the muslim terrorist groups, we can push their influence back and we can handle their presence within the wider islamic social movement.

Specific goals:

1. Making an overview about the Islam-related extremist ideologies. Through their historical background identifying their effect on the activities of the today muslim terrorist groups.

- 2. Through the method of historical comparison analyses introducing, identifying and phasing the radical islamist groups grew out of the social movement.
- 3. Analysing the nature of the danger in the western-type democratic societies caused by the radical political islamism.
- 4. Identifying those fields (politic, diplomatic, psichologic, economic, cultural, security, military) and their elements that could be used for forming a comlex strategy against muslim terrorism. Working out the way to reduce the influence of these radical ideologies and groups on the wider islamic social-political movement.
- 5. Clarifying the definitions concerning the terrorism generally and the terrorism claiming affiliation with Islam specifically.

### Method of research

In my research I use the analyses, synthesis, induction, deduction and the historical comparison method.

Concerning the root causes of muslim terrorism I rely on two experts' works and methods. First off all an american sociologist *Rodney Stark*<sup>3</sup> and his theory about the development of the social movements. The other expert is an italian-born woman, *Donatella della Porta*<sup>4</sup> who has worked out her model about the emergence of underground organizations.

Originally Rodney Stark has examined the american Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s, and Donatella della Porta studied the emergence of the italian clandestine organizations of the 1970s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Rodney Stark is an American sociologist of religion. He grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota in a Lutheran family. He spent time in the U.S. Army and as a journalist before pursuing graduate studies at The University of California, Berkeley. After teaching at the University of Washington for 32 years, Stark moved to Baylor University in 2004. He is an advocate of the application of Rational choice theory in the sociology of religion. One of Stark's hallmarks is writing with respect about the religions he studies. He has published 28 books and 144 articles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Donatella Della Porta is professor of sociology in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute. She is on leave of absence from the University of Florence, where she was full professor of Political Science, president of the corso di laurea in Administrative Sciences, and Director of the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Florence. Her research interests: Social movements, political violence, terrorism, corruption, police and policies of public order. On these issues she has conducted investigations in Italy, France, Germany and Spain. She has directed a project of comparative research on control of public mass demonstrations in Europe and one on the police in Italy. Currently she is involved in several comparative projects on citizenships and social movements.

In my dissertation I use their methods and modells to analyze the islamic politicalsocial movement of the arab world and its militant extremist splits. I do not make a catalog about the great variety of muslim fundamentalist groups and their specifics. What I do is to reveal the general internal mechanisms of these kind of groups. Having done it I come up with ideas and elements of a grand strategy that could help to deal with this phenomenon.

### Structure of dissertation

I evolve my topic through five chapters.

In the **first chapter** of my dissertation I make clear those theoretical definitions that I follow in my paper. First of all I find it very important to sum up the essence of the hundreds of terrorism definitions that are circulating all over the world including the specific approaches of the international institutions and organizations. I identify the four most important elements of the definitions as follows: terrorism is committed (1) use of force or violence, (2) against unarmed civilians, (3) to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives, (4) by non-state actors.

Secondly, I clarify the difference between *terrorism* and *insurgency*. I point out that key element of *terrorism* is the divorce of armed politics from a purported mass base, those in whose name terrorist claim to be fighting. In this case actually the perpetrators themself represent the movement. Little or no meaningful effort goes into construction of a "counterstate", which is the central activity of insurgency. Besides, terrorist use terrorism as a "logic of action", that is often referred as "pure terrorism". In contrast, *insurgencies*, while also armed expressions of organic, internal political disaffiliation, use terroristic action principally as one weapon among many ("terrorism as method of action") to facilitate construction of the counter-state. An insurgency is an armed political movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government or separation from it, through use of subversion and armed conflict.<sup>5</sup> The goal is to create a mass base by mobilizing human and material resources in order to form an alternative to the existing state (counter-state or with other term clandestine infrastructure).

Thirdly, I point out that distinction between terrorism and insurgency has to be drawn in order to find the proper method to cope with the phenomenon. In an insurgency we have to use counter-insurgency methods, but against terrorism we need to work out a counter-terrorist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> MARKS, Thomas A.: Insurgency in a Time of Terrorism. In: Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 2005), pp. 46–53.

strategy. It is very important to examine the nature of violence we are facing with and to choose the right method to handle it. The counter-terrorism should not be confused with counterinsurgency because the result could be disastrous for the state.

In the second chapter I present the historical process of the development of Islam fundamentalist ideologies. First of all I examine those trends and schools of thought which have serious influence on the existing militant Islam ideologies of our days. In this chapter I use the historical, legal, philosophical and social science parts of Islam religion only in a necessary proportion and I highlight only those elements that had led to the modern muslim terrorism.

First of all, as a starting point, I identify the three main areas of Islam fundamentalism: 1. Fundamentalist modernism (the followers want modernization and intend to adjust it to the traditional values of Islam), 2. Fundamentalist traditionalism (the followers refuse any kind of foreign effects or modern, new inventions and they just want to return – in a peacefull way – to the example of the "rightly guided" ancestors of 7th century), 3. Neofundamentalism (the violent followers want the islamization of the world: push the Islamic revolution, grab the power everywhere, follow the way of Jihad and destroy anybody who stand against their will).

Secondly I present in a historical order those radical muslim schools of thought that have resulted in the modern global jihadism. The phases: (1) Salafism, (2) Vahabism (that is a violent form of Salafism), (3) Salafi Jihadism, (4) Global Jihadism (or global salafi jihadism).

Thirdly I introduce the most influential muslim theocrats who have effect on the development of the modern Islam-related terrorist ideologies. These personalities are as follows.

First group: Hasan al-Banna, Mawlana Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.

Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), an Egyptian teacher, and Mawlana Mawdudi (1903-1979), an Indian-born Muslim journalist, were pious, educated men with traditional Islamic religous backgrounds and a knowledge of Western thought. Both placed primary blame for the ills of their society and the decline of the Muslim world upon European imperialism and westernized Muslim elites. Like revivalists of old, they initially called for moral and social reform but soon also became embroiled in political activism and opposition. Al-Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, and Mawdudi the Jamaat-i-Islami in India (later Pakistan) in 1941. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) an Egyptean teacher built upon and radicalized the ideas of al-Banna and Mawdudi. Qutb created an ideological legacy that incorporated all the major historical forms of jihad, from the reforms of Muhammad to the extremes of the Kharijites and the Assassins.Within a few short decades, the ideas of al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood and Mawdudi's Jamaat-i-Islami, often viewed through the prism of Qutb's more radicalized interpretation, became the primary models for new activist organizations across the Muslim world.<sup>6</sup>

# Second group: Dr Abdullah Azzam, Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Suri. Azzam, a Jordanian member of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and reportedly a founder of Hamas, had strong academic and Islamic activist credentials. He was trained at Damascus University in theology, he earned a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence at Egypt's famed al-Azhar University. He was also one of Osama bin Laden's teacher at King Abdulaziz University. He later become prominent in Afghanistan. He was described as the Emir of Jihad or Godfather of global jihad. Zawahiri was born in 1953 into a prominent and conservative religious family. He turned to political Islam after the disastrous Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the disillusionment over Arab secular nationalism and socialism. He was a gifted surgeon who became a leader of an Egyptean terrorist group on the road to becoming Osama bin Laden's confident, reputed mentor, and successor. Zawahiri possessed a deeper theological understanding and more international perspective than bin Laden, and he was responsible for broadening bin Laden's vista for jihad beyond the Arab world to a jihad against America and the West. Many believed that he masterminded the September 11, 2001, attacks.<sup>7</sup> Al-Suri, the Syrian's original name is Mustafa Sethmariam Nasar but he is best known by his "nom de guerre" Abu Musab al-Suri. He was born in 1958 in Aleppo, Syria. His best known work is the 1600-page book "The Global Islamic Resistance Call" which appeared on the Internet in December 2004. In this work he proposes that the next stage of jihad will be characterized by terrorism created by individuals or small autonomous groups (what he terms "leaderless resistance") which will wear down the enemy and prepare the ground for the far ambitious aim of waging war on open fronts. He declared: ".... without confrontation in the field and seizing control of the land, we cannot establish a state, which is the strategic goal of the resistance. The American occupation of Iraq inaugurated a historical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> ESPOSITO John L.: Unholy war – Terror in the name of Islam. Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 2002. p. 50-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ESPOSITO John L.: Unholy war – Terror in the name of Islam. p. 18-20.

new period that almost single-handedly rescued the jihadi movement just when many of its critics thought it was finished.<sup>8</sup>

Examining the most influential theocrats I emphasize that Osama bin Laden is not the leader of the radical Islam movement of our days, and not even the most important or most influential one. He is not the person who has launched the movement, he is not guiding it and even in case of his death the Muslim terrorism would go on. Bin Laden earned the position of central gravity by attacking the symbolic objects of the West and last but not least he became the main Devil by the effect of the international media.

In the third chapter I examine meticulously the process of the modern muslim radical movement's development. I point at the fact that the militant groups are splinters of a much wider peaceful muslim social movement which main goal is to modernize the muslim society but at least lessen the lag of the muslim world from the more developed West.

I describe the start, the phases, and the process of the muslim social movement, and with the help of historical comparisons I point at the principles of such a process where a social movement could result militant groups that split off the peaceful movement and represent a new violent form of fighting for the main goal.

I use Rodney Stark's sociolological approache to study the developement of the (peaceful) muslim social movement and Donatella della Porta's model to render the emergence of the violent clandestine muslim organizations. In Stark's case I call for help the American Civil Rights Movement but in Porta's case I use the history of the Muslim Brotherhood.

According to Rodney Stark, whenever people organize to cause or prevent social change, we identify them as a social movement. According to his theory there are eight phases to explain how social movements arise and succeed or fail in their quest to change society.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Sitt Maryam Nasar, also transliterated as Mustafa Sethmariam Nasar. In: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustafa\_Setmariam\_Nasar, 03.10.2006.



1. Some members of the society must share a *grievance* which they want to correct, either by changing society or by preventing a change they oppose.

2. These people must have *hope* – they must think there is some possibility of success.

3. Usually a *precipitating event* will ignite pent-up grievances and convince people that time for action has arrived.

4. people are recruited by social movements through *networks of attachments* (church congregation, civic-improvement club, trade union, sport club, etc.)

5. It must achieve an effective *mobilization of people and resources*. A social movement will be more successful to the degree that it enjoys effective leadership, attracts committed and disciplined members, and able to secure the necessary finances and facilities.

6. It must withstand or overcome external opposition. Usually a social movement will generate one or more *counter-movements*. (If a group organizes to cause social change, it is likely to be opposed by a group opposed to this change.)

7. The fate of a social movement depends on enlisting *external allies* from other major groups and powerful institutions in the society – or at least must be able to keep them neutral.

8. Whenever social movements arise in response to a grievance that is widely shared, and when sustantial resources are available, the movement will tend to be embodied in a number of *separate organizations*. These organizations may cooperate but often they compete vigorously.

By using Stark's theory in my dissertation I introduce the whole evolution of the muslim social movement.



After Stark theory of social movements I turn to Donatella della Porta's model for introducing the emergence of a clandestine organization:

By using the above mentioned model I analyze the history of the Muslim Brotherhood and I identify the main principles of this radicalization process.

In the next paragraph I clarify the al-Qaeda phenomenon. I introduce the origin of this group that had existed as an organization only between 1998 and 2002. After the American strikes the organization has been annihilated or scattered. It is not anymore a hierarchical organization led by a central commander and followed by disciplined members. What we witness today is a loose network of networks which consist of dozens of jihadized person, groups and organizations. They are not strictly connected, overhelmingly they do not even know each other, they just use the name "al-Qaeda" as a trademark. Actually there is no direct

organization-like contact between the different groups even if they are looking for each other and the last couple of month we could observe a kind of reintegration process among them. What makes them dangerous is the international connectivity, their incalculable, and irrationale behaviour, fanatic desire to kill innocent people and their aspiration to get ABC weapons for accomplishing the goal.

At the last paragraph in the third chapter I examine the nature of danger of westerntype democratic societies caused by their rapidly growing muslim population and the influence of the radical political islamism among them (homegrown terrorists). I conclude that the problem is getting more and more serious and Western Europe – unlike the USA – will face soon a Muslim crisis. Beside the necessary national security measures it could be handled by a more effective integration strategy and last but not least by influencing in many indirect way the ongoing wider muslim social movement in the Arab world.

*In the fourth chapter* I identify those areas that could be used for forming a comlex strategy against muslim terrorism. These most important areas are as follows: 1.) politics, 2.) diplomacy, 3.) psychology, 4.) economy, 5.) culture, 6.) security, 7.) military.

Analyzing these areas I point out some elements and give a couple of ideas in order to work out the way to reduce the influence of the Islam radical ideologies and groups within the wider Muslim social-political movement.

#### **Research summary**

In my dissertation I discover the root causes of the type of terrorism that is claiming affiliation with Islam and work out the framework of a feasible and effective strategy to deal with it.

I base my research on terrorism-experts from the National Defence University "Zrínyi Miklós" and the Military Intelligence Office of the Hungarian Republic. Besides I use the professional papers and researches of the best known American and European terrorist-experts.

*In the first part of my paper* I present a basic knowlege about the development of the radical Islam-related ideologies and its representatives. With the help of parallel historical

events of the American Civil Rights Movements of '50s and the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, I prove that radical groups grow out of a wider social movement. I identify the main stages of the islamic social movement and point out those causes and principles that have resulted in forming of militant islamic groups.

*In the second part of my paper* based on my first part findings I form the framework of a possible and feasible strategy that intends to reduce the muslim terrorism phenomenon. The main elements of this strategy are: (1) politics, (2) diplomacy, (3) psychology, (4) economy, (5) culture, (6) security, (7) military.

By the complex and careful use of these elements I prove that even if we can not destroy all the today muslim terrorist groups, we can push their influence back and we can handle their presence within the wider islamic social movement. I prove that the impact and importance of the muslim terrorism could be reduced from social-political level to a simple law-enforcement problem. In this way the danger represented by the Islam-related terrorism for the western-type democracies could be repelled definitely.

### New scientific results

- 1. I clarified the different terrorism definitions generally and the Islam-related terrorism specifically.
- Using Rodney Stark's theory about social movements I have examined the development of the radical Islam ideologies within the wider muslim social movement. Through the historical background I have identified their effects on the activities of the today muslim terrorist groups.
- Through the method of historical comparison and by using Donatella della Porta's model about the emergence of clandestine organizations I have identified the main phases of the development of the radical islamist organizations.
- 4. I have anylized the nature of danger in the western-type democratic societies caused by the radical political islamism. I concluded that the danger could be reduced by

numerous paralel measures like developing national security measures, working out an effective European integration strategy for muslims, and last but not least influencing in many indirect way the ongoing wider muslim social movement in the Arab world.

5. I have identified those fields (political, diplomatic, psychological, economic, cultural, security, military) and their contents that could be used for forming a comlex strategy against Islam-related terrorism.

#### **Recommendations**, practical adaptability

The dissertation can be used for the information of the different committees of the Parliamanet, such as the Committee of Defence, Foreign Affairs, National Security or Law Enforcement in the topic of muslim radicalism and terrorism. Based on our peacekeeper and peacemaker military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the dissertation can be a useful manual for orientating the political decision-makers.

It is essential to have a basic knowledge of the experts of the Military Intelligence Office of the Hungarian Republic, the Information Office of the Hungarian Republic, the Military Security Office of the Hungarian Republic and the National Security Office of the Hungarian Republic on Islam fundamentalism. It is also important for these people to use a common language with the same terms and definitions.

The dissertation is useful for the analysts and those officers who work as clandestine members of the Military Intelligence Office of the Hungarian Republic to understand the main Islam ideologies and modern radical movements.

For the experts of the Ministry of Defence, it can be used as course manuscript about the terrorism.

The main conclusions of the essay can be used as guidelines for a doctrine about counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency.

The dissertation could be useful as training material for officers and NCO's.

The PhD students of the university can use it as a manuscript for widening the basic knowledge about military sciences and terrorism.

The operational officers could use it for organizing and planning the peace operations in the Arab World.

The civilian students of the university could use it at CIMIC operations and for informing the media about military missions.

The dissertation could be used the best for training military contingents preparing for missions to the Arab World.

The US Army has a special terminology for collecting and organizing social, religious, economic, cultural, anthropological, historical datas about the AOR. It is called ,,cultural intelligence". For example, in Iraq analysts made 30-40 pages essays about the basic useful knowledge. They wrote different essays about Kurds, Shias, Sunnis. Like our American collegues, the officers of the Military Intelligence Office of the Republic of Hungary also write useful manuals for the contingents. The training must be different: not the same level of knowledge is usable for an intelligence analyst or an armoured personnel carrier's driver. On the other hand, in PRT everybody must know the cultural background well enough, because these soldiers have a daily contact with the locals.

- 1.) For HUMINT Operators it is essential to have a detailed knowledge about the culture of the area of responsibility. They have to build rapport with the local inhabitants, and they have to satisfy them to give us information about the area. In the "rapport building" period, the intelligence officer's main aim is to establish a relationship based not only on financial benefits or obligation, but more on emotional level. If the HUMINT Operator is well-trained, basic mistakes can be avoidable at the first meetings. It is very important to show, that the HUMINT Operator has a great knowledge on the area. The Operator's adequate questions must prove this too. Wrong questions could ruin even the best cooperation intentions.
- 2.) CAT II or CAT III interpreter could well use the dissertation too. CAT I interpreters belong to the local inhabitants, but they speak the language of the military personnel operating on the area (English, or in our case Hungarian). They obviously know the cultural background better than us, but their reliability is doubtful, we cannot use them in the meetings with the most sensitive contacts. Their main advantage is the fact that they are familiar with the area. CAT II interpreters are those persons who come from the same country as the military staff (peacekeepers, peacemakers) and they know the local language because of their studies, or because they are second or third generation natives. CAT III interpreters come from the area of operation and they belong to the

defence forces as well. In this case they are the most reliable interpreters. The handicap is that they lived their life in totally different environment, so they need to familiarize the cultural background to build connections with the locals. It is generally known fact that contacts prefer to speak in the presence of CAT II or CAT III interpreters. They trust them more than CAT I's, because they feel more sure that the given information will not leak out to the local microsociety. CAT I's are locals, so they have more opportunity for gossiping, hence sensitive information and person can be compromised.

- 3.) In the AOR's where the majority of inhabitants are Muslims, military people working in NIST or NIC or S-2 can use the material, too. They meet locals less frequently than the previously mentioned individuals, but writing reports, analyzing information cannot be successful without a detailed background knowledge.
- 4.) The dissertation could be a usable manual for those experts, whose work is indirectly connected to reconnaissance and intelligence, like PSYOPS and CIMIC officers, but MP's and planning officers can get also help from the dissertation.

### PUBLICATION CATALOGUE

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- 2. *The birth of modern terrorism in Europe*. Aarms Academic and Applied Research in Military Science, Volume 6, Issue 3, 2007. p. 451-459.
- Democracy promotion as part of Global War on Terror. Tradecraft Review Republic of Hungary – Military Security Office, 2008. Special Issue, p. 75-83.
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1993- 1999	MK KFH
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### **Professional Curriculum Vitae**

1999-2004	Külszolgálat
2004-2005	Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, USA, Washington "Terrorizmus Elleni Harc" – tanfolyam
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