

TERRORIST ACTION FROM A MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Regardless of the historical period, whether modern or contemporary, the media was an instrument of publicity of the terrorist act. Excessive media coverage of the terrorist act and the satisfaction of appetites for sensational public opinion, often overcome by the situation, led to situations that were hard to imagine: the society unhappy with a certain situation, insecurity, and violent reaction to the authorities at that time to the government. Thus a collective and generalized psychosis has been inoculated, an eloquent example of which is the speech by the leader of fundamentalist terrorism, Ben Laden, immediately after the launch of US military defeat against Afghanistan on 7 October 2001 via Al Jazeera, as well as the fierce call to jihad spokesperson for the Al Qaeda organization on October 10, 2001.

The stakes were very high in this play of statements, and Ben Laden proves to be a very dangerous and subtle propaganda opponent knowing how to exploit his image in the Islamic world: "his ill-suited fragility, gallant gossip, the austere décor of his dwellings: caves, comfortless tents referring to the flight of the Prophet Muhammad to Medina, the unsavory Kalashnikov supported alongside, were perfectly matched with the profoundly religious asceticism and charge of messages, being perceived by Muslims as a genuine new prophet or martyr of Islam. " His actions are not inspired only by verses in the Qur'an, but are mainly political. The main claims are, in fact, to exclude Westerners from the Arab-Muslim traditional area of influence and to resolve conflicts, including the Arab-Israeli problem, a deep-rooted problem, which led to political and military instability in that area throughout the 20th century.

Is Al-Qaeda a unique terrorist organization in history and very dangerous for the safety of Europeans only because it comes from Arab space? Probably not, because retrospectively, only in the 20th century, violent organizations acted everywhere in the European space, no matter what motivation they had: "Legion of the Archangel Michael" in 1927 in Romania; IRA, Irish Republican Army, organized in 1919 following the struggle for independence of Ireland; ETA, Euskadi ta Azkatasuna, "Basque Territory and Freedom", which emerged in Spain in 1959 with separatist aims and independence for the Basque Country in northern Spain; The extreme left-wing brigades in 1970 in Italy all fueled by group solidarity, based on a strong sense of national affiliation, creating true national myths and identifying their own ideals with the "will" of a whole nation, and the list can to remain open. Terrorism does not only appeal to the physical integrity of a nation, but to its moral structure

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In 1947, Yasser Arafat, the president of the Palestine Liberation Organization, told the UN General Assembly: "The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reasons why

each of them is fighting. There can not be called a terrorist who stands up for a just cause and strives for freedom and liberation of the country against invaders, colonies and colonists. ”¹

Unfortunately, the terrorist does not make the difference between legal and illegal, regarding politically exclusive actions. The difference between the actions of the terrorist groups is reduced to the number of victims. ²

Excessive mediatization of quantitative assassinations inoculated collective and generalized psychosis, an eloquent example of which was the speech by the leader of fundamentalist terrorism, Ben Laden, immediately after the launch of US military counter-terrorism against Afghanistan on 7 October 2001 via Al Jazeera television, and the fierce call to jihad of Al Qaeda's spokesman on October 10, 2001. The stakes were very high in this play of statements, Ben Laden proving to be a very dangerous and subtle propaganda opponent knowing how to exploit his image in the Islamic world : „His sick fragility, gentle gesture, the austere décor of his dwellings: caves, comfortless tents that referred to the flight of the Prophet Muhammad to Medina, the unsavory Kalashnikov supported alongside, were perfectly attuned to the deeply religious asceticism and charge of messages, being perceived by the mosque mani as an authentic new prophet or a martyr of Islam. His actions are not only inspired by the verses of the Qur'an, but are mainly political.” The main claims are, in fact, to exclude Westerners from the Arab-Muslim traditional area of influence and to resolve conflicts, the Arab-Israeli one, a deep-rooted problem, which caused political and military instability in that area throughout the 20th century.

Cultural Anthropologist Jim Denison in "Radical Islam - What You Need to Know" has tried to identify the causes of the lack of communication between the West and the Orient. One of the causes, according to the author, would be the conviction of Muslims that the West has been attacking Islam since the Crusades, and Pope Urban II was the initiator of anti-Islamic attacks with the organization of the first crusade in 1095, crusades being perceived as intentional attacks against the entire Muslim community, ummah, a religious collectivity whose evolution does not take into account time and space, and so the attack of any Muslim is, theoretically and practically, an attack on the entire Islamic community.

The Princetown University professor, Bernard Lewis, emeritus professor in the book "The Crisis of Islam - The Holy War and Unholy Terror," states that the western mind defines the country, the nation, the people as basic units of the human organization, while Muslims defining religion for human organization.³

After September 11, 2001 there was an increase in censorship at the American media level. "People need to be careful about what they say and what they do," says Ari Fleischer, White House spokesman at the time.

Some of those who attempted to examine the causes of the September 11 attacks had incurred a number of allegations from the authorities: for example, writer Susan Sontag who considered the attacks to be the "consequence of certain US actions and alliances", and the tabloid new-yorkez The Daily News described all those who attempted to provide explanations for attacks from a different

¹ Vasile Simileanu, *Radiografia terorismului*, București, Top Form, 2004, p.102.

² *Idem*, *Conflicte asimetrice*, București, Top Form, 2011, p.360.

³ Dan Laurențiu Niță, *Lupii singuratici: terorismul de franciză*, București, Editura Antet, 2014, p.26.

perspective than the official one as "the 1960s, radical radical Muslims, extreme left-wing factions, angry fools whom only the enemy can love them".⁴

The media are easily influenced and manipulable, as its role is to convey to the public "the information it needs and to which it has the right", leaving their interpretation to the perception of each individual. The public image of acts of terrorism and of the terrorist, in the contemporary era, is imposed by the image, the online and not necessarily the offline.

Another highly publicized terrorist action was the case of John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo who terrified America with their attacks in 2002. At that time, "the American media has allocated extremely generous spaces to analysis and presentation step by step, of the actions of the two. The New York Times was exposed to a major scandal when it turned out that the articles signed by Jayson Blair on the subject were inventions aimed at increasing the number of amateur readers of".⁵

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The legion of Archangel Michael, in 1927, was in Romania. A security body document, describing the profile of this organization, states: "From an organizational point of view, the Michael Archangel Michael Legion, founded on June 24, 1927, is constituted on nationalist-extremist principles. The basis of this organization is a political-military doctrine, dressed in a religious mysticism." The document cites Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's "accounts", among which "the fight against the old parties, with new methods and dictatorial principles."⁶

IRA, Irish Republican Army, organized in 1919 following the struggle for independence of Ireland. In 1969 it is divided into two wings: Official, OIRA and Provisorius, PIRA, initially both being very aggressive, but since 1971 OIRA opts for nonviolence.⁷PIRA continues violent actions, preferred methods of action being bombardment, bomb attacks, missile bombings and mortars.⁸

ETA, Euskadi ta Azkatasuna, "Basque Territory and Freedom", which emerged in Spain in 1959 with separatist aims and independence for the Basque Country in northern Spain. In its actions, the ETA targets "the Spanish government officials, members of the security services, the army. He is suspected of over 500 assassinations, since 1968, being one of the most violent groups in Europe."⁹

The extreme left-wing Brigades in 1970 in Italy all fueled by group solidarity, based on a strong sense of national affiliation, creating true national myths and identifying their own ideals with the "will" of an entire nation, and the list can to remain open.

⁴Cristian Barna(coordonator), *Sfârșitul terorismului și noua (dez)ordine mondială*, București, Top Form, 2009, p.108.

⁵Dan Laurențiu Niță, *op.cit.*, pp. 126-127.

⁶Mihai Fătu, Ion Spălățelu, *Garda de Fier. Organizație teroristă de tip fascist*, București, Editura Politică, 1980, p.52.

⁷Gheorghe Arădăvoaice, Dumitru Iliescu, Laurențiu Dan Niță, *Terorism, antiterorism, contraterorism. Istoric, actualitate, perspective*, Oradea, Editura Antet, 1997, p.264

⁸*Ibidem*, p.265

⁹*Ibidem*, p.256

And in these cases, the press has written thousands of lines contributing to creating a strong echo in public opinion.

The war on terrorism must not have the effect of violating human rights. Kenneth Roth, executive director of the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch, said: "Terrorists believe that the purpose is excused by means, and that their political and social visions justify killing civilians, violating the vital human rights. Fighting terrorists without protecting human rights means we will confirm this inverted logic."¹⁰

A reconciliation between Christians and Muslims was attempted by Pope Benedict XVI through his visit to Lebanon in 2012. He held seven speeches in which he expressed the hope that the Middle East will know peace. The Pontiff sovereign, out of the open-air altar surrounded by cedars, the symbol of Lebanon, and olive trees, symbolizing peace, said that "serving justice and peace in a world where violence ceases to expand the corollary of death and destruction is an emergency to engage in a fraternal society to make communion. "

Tens of thousands of believers attended the ministry, and the entire international media was present, expressing its own vision of the event. Pontiff sovereign was greeted with exuberance by the population of the most unstable region of the planet "the Pope's visit is very important to Lebanon and may bring peace to us and the region."

American or European cinema did not miss the events considered topical, for example, „Body of Lies”¹¹, a film centered on a simple idea: the cultural difference between the West and the Orient and the fact that incompatibilities are not always recognized and no real solutions are sought to be resolved; or "Secret Defense"¹², centered on concepts such as "radicalization, militarism, terrorism, cognitive dissonance, cultural shock".¹³

"You do not need to hear about us, but to hear from us"¹⁴, an assertion that practically comes and expresses the terrorist's own conception of what terrorism means. From Al Jazeera to Twitter, the ability of terrorist cells to produce propaganda propaganda material that sensitizes and determines the adhesion of certain socio-ethnic segments to sensitive issues is demonstrated. It can also go on the formula "We talk. You are listening. "Of course, involving the random formula of what every listener understands!

In the contemporary era, most people do not trust what they read and hear: everywhere they hear about corruption, fraud, abuse, ... No matter what media channel is used, "conversations give rise to other conversations." Blogging is the right tool that allows anyone to send messages directly to anyone who is willing to "listen to" and receive reactions from them. Terrorist actions of the future will only adapt and use new technologies. They will exploit social changes, political-territorial transformations, change spheres of influence not only locally but also globally. The longer the distances and the more numerous the interests, the harder to manage will be the actions aimed at stopping the terrorist actions. Blogging can trick you; you may think that you are in conversation with

¹⁰Dan Laurențiu Niță, *op.cit.*, p.112.

¹¹Producție SUA, Scott Free Production, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2008. Regia: Sir Ridley Scott, Rating IMDB: 7,1/10

¹²Producție Franța, UGC YM, France 3 Cinema, France 2 Cinema, 2008. Regia: Philippe Haim. Rating IMDB: 6,5/10

¹³Dan Dongaciu, Darie Cristea, *Doctrina, strategii, politici: de la discursul geopolitic la operaționalizarea securității internaționale*, București, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2012, p.157.

¹⁴Michael Weiss, Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Armata djihadului*, București, Corint Books, 2016, p.218.

the whole world, when it is actually a few, discussing frequently between them, back and forth, giving amplification to the message transmitted.¹⁵

Terrorist actions are adapting to new conditions in order to diversify their methods of action and media coverage: global, physical and ideological mobility; media tools provide instant access to real-world audiences at a global level; new military technologies, accessible to all who have financial resources, complicate the situation; sensitive areas of society provide opportunities for terrorist action.¹⁶

Computer access can be synthesized in "the new reality of the market at the moment is that a consumer has a choice," "I can ignore you ... Consequently, you or any marketer are in the face of a decision: you can create something that make you worthy of being people's attention or you can become invisible. There are now millions of blogs and each is edited by a real being. If you accomplish something remarkable, something worthwhile, then these people can choose to remark you. And if they notice you, they say further about you ... If you invested time, energy and courage to create something remarkable, this audience is just waiting to hear about it."¹⁷

Often, the perception of events depends on the story. In the novel "The Secret Agent," written by Josef Conrad, the character, a clever academic professor, excluded from academic life, seeks to liquidate the head of the British anti-terrorist structure, chief inspector Heat. This is how the character turns into a "storming bomb on the streets of London". In this context, the professor states that "nothing would make me more pleasure than see the police by shooting a suspect in the afternoon, and with the approval of the citizens. Half of our struggle would have been won if we could destroy morality in democratic institutions."¹⁸

Living in the reality beyond the screen of the computer or television, the images begin to have an ascendant on reason. Sublime goes beyond direct expression, and erroneous computer-induced constructions can easily take the place of everyday reality. In this context, the entire communication and image system of terrorists is based on psychic manipulation. The message sent by terrorist organizations, in most cases, is that society has proved to be overwhelmed by the new world order and the exigencies of it. One of the most well-known terrorism specialists Brian Jenkins says that "terrorists want a lot of people looking and a lot of dead people."¹⁹

„The force of argumentation in influencing realities is unprecedented in interuman communication, be it erroneous argumentation or valid argumentation. It is well known in the field of communication sciences that the vast majority of the techniques used in propaganda are based on intentional content mistakes."²⁰

The principle of free access to information, guaranteed both by the fundamental laws of states and by international law, allows anyone the right to receive answers to questions that concern him. But not always, the requested information comes from a direct source. In most cases, access to information is limited by the public interest. Many information accessed by the public comes from an

¹⁵Robert Scoble, Shel Israel, *Conversații libere*, București, Editura Nemira &Co., 2008, p.175

¹⁶Gheorghe Arădăvoaice, Dumitru Iliescu, Laurențiu Dan Niță, *Terorism, antiterorism, contraterorism. Istoric, actualitate, perspective*, Oradea, Editura Antet, 1997, pp. 125-126

¹⁷Robert Scoble, Shel Israel, *op.cit.*, pp.55-56.

¹⁸Gheorghe Arădăvoaice, Dumitru Iliescu, Laurențiu Dan Niță, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

¹⁹Vasile Simileanu, *Conflicte asimetrice*, București, Editura Top Form, 2011, p. 279.

²⁰Aurelia Ana Vasile, *Mass Media și gândirea critică*, București, Editura Triton, 2012, p.7.

intermediary: the journalist. In this context, the journalist has an obligation to "proceed to a closer analysis of the facts and the consequences" of his actions.²¹

Regardless of attitude, we must recognize that we are in a digital conversation era. Very few people appeal to the print media. The place of the traditional journalist was taken by the blogger, and then by the vlogger. Everything happens live and in real time. If the old journalist has a professional deontology, one can not say the same about online actors. Blogs are at the center of a revolution ending an era and giving birth to another.²²

"An instrument is only an instrument," the difference being ensured through access to education and culture.

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²¹Lucian-Vasile Szabo, *Capcane ale comunicării. Puteri și...puteri în mass-media*, Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2011, p.85.

²²Robert Scoble, Shel Israel, *op.cit.*, p.297.