

Original article

Contribution to the participation of military structures in the fight against terrorism

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is, through the violence that characterizes it, one of the most serious threats to global order and civilization, making the security of the individual and society more fragile domestically and internationally. The fight against terrorism involves challenges for military forces targeting issues of legitimacy and legality in relation to the population of the area of operations and to the persons involved or supporting terrorist acts, responsibility for the principles of democracy, human dignity and fundamental human rights. The issue of participation of military structures in the fight against terrorism is not something new. What is new, however, is the prospect of conscious and mature approach to risks and threats which military forces face in the conflicts they are engaged in.

KEYWORDS

terrorism, military intervention, comprehensive approach, interagency

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Introduction

The unpredictability of the current security environment results particularly from the considerable increase of threats and risks arising from terrorism. The beginning of this century and millennium will be considered for a long time, a milestone in the evolution of both the terrorism and the counterterrorism response initiated by the civilized world. It is increasingly evident that the number of vulnerabilities of any state in the face of terrorist actions has grown considerably. Today, terrorism is a persistent threat, with manifestations difficult to anticipate and counteract.

Actions of international terrorist organizations are conducted under the banner of nationalist and ethnic slogans of an unprecedented offensive carried out by extremist groups primarily Islamic-fundamentalist circulated by new, different from the *classical*, terrorist structures, the so-called unregistered networks. Meanwhile, a phenomenon

that has gained momentum and characterized almost all outbreaks of armed conflicts in the past decade and a half is the insurgency that evolved towards joining the insurgency's classical methods of fighting with methods and types of action used by terrorist entities, forcing present military structures in theaters of operation to review and reconsider their missions, forms and methods of action.

The establishment of military-political coalitions that would manage crises due to the re-emergence of terrorism and radical insurgency have made efforts in the fight against terrorist organizations to be more efficient. However, the effects are still not convincing enough because military force structures are not perfectly adapted to this type of operations. As a result, structural and doctrinal changes have occurred in the organization of the security and military services and various interagency collaborations have been established.

1. The issue of terrorism as a major threat to state security

The presence and evolution of terrorism is linked to the very existence and development of mankind. Its strength lies in hatred, intolerance, religious fanaticism, the attitude of countries with high terrorist potential as well as human and material resources that terrorist entities possess.

In 2016 terrorism continued to be a major issue worldwide, from the Middle East and Africa, to France or the United States, and a record number of terrorist attacks were planned, foiled or successfully perpetrated in the European Union, most of them directed against Belgium, Germany and France. The terrorist activity represented by the Islamic State (IS) terrorist network made an uncertain threat, largely confined to the Middle East, one of the largest global security challenges after the Cold War. Apart from Syria and Iraq, which proclaimed a caliphate, the Sunni fundamentalist organization launched or inspired major terrorist attacks against distant targets in Europe and the USA [1].

Information and technology may become instruments of terrorism. In a world of information, the terrorists have learned how to turn its use into an asset. Thus, the media broadcasts to the general-public information on the existence and severity of terrorism, thus offering a particular importance of the phenomenon, which may lead not only to finding new adherents easier, but also to the recognition of the disastrous effects of terrorist activity. Furthermore, it may enable achieving the most important objectives of terrorists: creating panic and fear among the population, the loss of sense of safety, thus implicitly to the distrust in the state, leading, ultimately, to destabilizing the security situation. In this context, on October 13th, 2002, F. Ruse Council (Upper House of Parliament) approved the amendment to limit freedom of expression of the media on anti-terrorist operations carried out by state structures [2]. In this way, measures to combat terrorism taken by the state can not be analyzed or criticized by the media and the conduct of any maneuver considered against terrorist actions will remain in silence, with all aspects involved (participating forces, location, tactics, details on the attack etc.). It is therefore obvious that the supposed impact on the population would not be far-reaching. By keeping details of the existence of terrorist actions

silent, namely the need to combat them, peace among the population and a more vigilant surveillance on potential aggressors and threats might be maintained.

Terrorism is “itself a system seemingly chaotic and random, with asymmetrical rapid actions” and terrorist actions reach “such a magnitude, in terms of the number and effects, that one can speak of a terrorist war” [3, p. 73]. Terrorist threats have intensified with appearances of increasingly numerous terrorist groups across the globe amid various ideological or financial reasons.

As part of the states’ duty to protect the life and security of persons under their jurisdiction, states have the right and obligation to take effective counter-terrorism measures to prevent and deter future terrorist attacks. Contemporary terrorism has become a phenomenon which is not only an illegal, but also unprincipled threat to internal, as it was traditionally considered, and to international security, to peaceful relations between states and to the development and functioning of democratic institutions in the world. Therefore, international legal regulation of the fight against terrorism was made both at the UN and at the regional level, within the Council of Europe, of American States and the Arab states.

If the challenges of fighting terrorism manifest today globally and this process is lengthy, the response can only be globally, benefiting from the contribution of the international community. The fight against the scourge of terrorism must be included in a comprehensive and multidimensional approach of the international community so as to intertwine political, legal, economic, diplomatic and ultimately military means in a process in which political dialogue should play an essential part.

Given the magnitude of terrorist threats that worry the international community, they should be effectively combated by introducing management in a broader context, in which the States concerned will join efforts and develop effective cooperation between specialized institutions.

2. The legality of military intervention to combat terrorism

Military intervention, as a military action undertaken to combat terrorism, beyond the aspects of its necessity, requires attention paid to certain aspects related to its justification from the perspective of international law, legitimacy, morality and desirability. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the counterterrorist intervention involving military structures was outlined as the reaction not only to a large terrorist action, but also as the lasting manifestation of conflictuality, which led to the first-time application of the term *war on terror*. From this perspective, the military intervention to crush terrorist organizations or those which use practices of terrorism, as is the case of the military intervention in Afghanistan or the one against the Islamic State organization of Levant and Iraq, finds legal coverage in terms of international law in conventions, resolutions and other international instruments on the prevention and combating international terrorism developed mainly under the auspices of the United Nations.

Using military force to defeat terrorism is often risky because it cannot be understood and accepted by the public opinion, especially if abuses or errors are committed and

they may lead to loss of life. From this perspective, in the current international context, the international community opts for legislative and doctrinal measures to redesign the role of military efforts, increasing the role of political-diplomatic actions aimed at enlarging anti-terrorist coalitions, weakening the capacity of terrorist structures, monitoring the most active terrorist organizations, creating and training specialized forces in combating the phenomenon, the exchange of information between specialized agencies as well as improving measures to protect institutions.

Agreements between states on cooperation in preventing and combating terrorism, confirm the determination to create a broad and unified legal framework, which meets the requirements arising from the evolving global terrorism. Responsible and effective engagement in the international campaign against terrorism, including the military participation if necessary, should represent a major milestone for all countries involved in combating this phenomenon. In this spirit, the following view was expressed at the NATO Summit in Warsaw (2016): “The essential mission of NATO is unchanged: to ensure that the Alliance remains an unprecedented community founded on freedom, peace, security and common values, including individual freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We are united in our commitment to the Washington Treaty, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and to the transatlantic link, which is vital. In order to protect and defend our indivisible security and shared values, the Alliance must and will continue to effectively meet all three fundamental tasks set out in the strategic concept: collective defense, crisis management and security cooperation. These tasks remain completely relevant, complementary and help protect the freedom and security of all Allies” [4].

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union acts to mobilize all civilian and military instruments in order to any prevent terrorist risk in the Member States, protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from terrorist attacks, ensuring support to Member States in their territory at the request of political authorities thereof in case of a terrorist attack or natural or a man-created disaster [Cf: 5, p. 217]. Moreover, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism adopted in Warsaw on May 16, 2005 reaffirms that terrorist offenses, regardless of their authors, can not be justified by considerations in view of their political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other similar nature, and if they cannot be prevented, they must be investigated and punished with penalties which take into account their grave nature. At the same time, it calls on Member States to give priority to the fight against terrorism and reaffirms that all measures taken for the prevention or suppression of terrorist offenses must respect the rules of law and democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principles of freedom of expression and freedom of association as well as other provisions of international law, including international humanitarian law, if applicable.

3. The vulnerabilities of the terrorist entities

A vulnerability of terrorist entities to be exploited in operations aimed at combating the phenomenon is the exacerbated role of spiritual leaders which enables the author-

ities to identify them easily and act effectively to have them captured or destroyed. To avoid removal of leaders from combat, terrorists have already adopted the solutions of creating smaller operational cores, more difficult to discover and identify, and taking special measures to comply with conspiracy. However, this structuring model creates another weak point because a tiny structure lacks the resources and means to enable it to perform extensive action with effects that could profoundly shake a system targeted.

Another vulnerability to terrorist entities is the reaction of rejection from the majority of population and the authorities' response to the methods and processes of their unlawful actions undertaken to achieve the goals set (to steal, rob, kill, detonate bombs, destroy material, cultural and spiritual goods, etc.).

A vulnerability of terrorist entities is also the one represented by the access to new technologies, since the use by terrorists of computer technology and communications make them discoverable and easily identifiable targets by structures that act to combat the phenomenon.

Exploiting vulnerabilities of terrorism requires understanding its root causes, developing legislation and measure plans with concrete anti-terrorist actions and broad international cooperation at the information and operational levels. None of the measures taken should overlook drastic surveillance, financial initiatives and constraints, as financial resources are essential for the purchase of materials and technical resources for the preparation and execution of terrorist acts, while interception and interruption of financial helping streams contributes significantly to managing the crisis occurred, at least in terms of the ability to procure the necessary means for combatants' training and achievement of objectives.

4. Participation of military structures in prevention and combating terrorism

Seen as part of the defense dimension, commitment of military structures in the fight against terrorism involves the development of specific capabilities necessary for the specifics of the response to asymmetric and hybrid threats, achieving performance standards to accomplish interoperability with other military forces in the alliance/coalition and harmonization of provisions that regulate the training of armed forces.

The threat posed by terrorism is generating risks that may include the increase of national and regional instability, appearance of anomic states in the society, radicalization of extremist entities within minorities, increase of transnational organized crime, illegal trafficking of conventional arms, escalating migration generated by evacuation from areas of conflict, natural disasters, pandemics and environmental disasters. The materialization of any of these threats must entail the adequate multidimensional response, having defense, public order, intelligence, counterintelligence and security, diplomatic activity and employment of crisis management capabilities as main components.

Combating terrorism should be seen as a political-military action in which military operations are intended as a final state for obtaining or regaining legitimacy of the host

nation government, so that it can provide essential services for the population, eliminate the causes that led to terrorist and insurgent movements and prevent crises and other similar phenomena.

As part of stabilization missions, military operations to combat terrorism require a comprehensive approach in their preparation and conduct within an integrative concept, by using civilian and military instruments and developing cooperation relations with other international actors. To generate the desired effects in such an approach, the structures of military forces require command and control capabilities, provision of information, mobility and employment of the adversary, support, insurance and protection, influencing perceptions, attitudes and behavior and post-conflict reconstruction support as well.

The war against terrorism has proved to be both an armed struggle and one of the ideas, the fight waged against terrorists and their ideology. The physiognomy of the fight against terrorism is special due to the conditions of operation and is conferred by new principles such as impartiality, consensus, limiting the use of force, perseverance and long-term vision, legitimacy, credibility, mutual respect, transparency, freedom of motion, efficiency, environmental protection and cultural values. The atypical nature of the fight against terrorism justifies the absence (for the moment being) of specific principles. However, the principles of counterinsurgency operations formulated in NATO Doctrine [Acc: 6, p. 3-12–3-13]. may be deemed to be valid: policy prevails; act in support of the people and not against them; ensure the legitimacy of its operations; intelligence leads the actions; ensure unity of effort; isolate insurgents from civilians and neutralizes their actions; prepare for long-term operations; make sure security is achieved through the rule of law; transfer security responsibilities to local authorities as soon as possible, but not earlier than practicable; learn and adapt faster than your opponent to ever-changing situations.

The issue of these principles is not the subject of this study but their essence completes the image on the particularities distinguishing the actions to combat terrorism from major combatant operations, other operations to facilitate stabilization (arms control, support of operations against drugs, humanitarian and civic assistance, assistance given to a nation, evacuation of non-combatants, demonstration of force) and peace support operations or activities to support a wide range of other activities specific to the post-conflict period.

A major role in shaping the physiognomy of counterterrorism operations is played by the efforts of non-military organizations and agencies, which facilitate interactions between social groups, support to the local population, reduction and elimination of external support to terrorists. Experience shows that a much longer period of resource employment is needed for the missions executions and achievement of political-military objectives of operations to fight terrorism than in classical military operations, since in this kind of operation no fight is decisive and the time required for the host nation government to be able to actually assume responsibility for protecting their interests and the community can stretch over many months or even years.

The experience in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated that the counterinsurgency operation is a major weakness of Western military forces, because it takes place in an environment with networking features, with dispersing individuals who use terrorist tactics, acting among noncombatants inside the urban settlements. Such tactics requires a common ability to achieve a range of physical and cognitive effects.

Employing various agencies in stability operations and implicitly in their fight against terrorism confers certain advantages in planning and conducting military operations. One of them would be a comprehensive analysis of the situation that is carried out by the military intervention force to deeply understand causes that have triggered the phenomenon and assess risk more accurately. This promotes better coordination in the planning of actions and thus greater achievement of effects and goals. Military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated the importance of a holistic approach in terms of the interagency character of the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, which thus acquires a prominent civilian-military character.

Both for planning and conducting military operations to combat terrorism, it is important to focus on military aspects and resources as well as on the non-military ones of employing forces. This involves identifying new ways of effective cooperation at all levels with relevant organizations and agencies in the action area for the design of combat effects.

The fight against terrorism necessitates a comprehensive approach to operations from the military structures, which involves the adoption of integrating concepts on the use of their capabilities¹ to generate desired effects. Viewed from the systemic perspective, military forces structures engaged in such operations require credible and sustainable performance common to all operations in the following areas: command and control, communications and providing informational support, opponent's employment, force projection, insurance, protection and support [Acc: 7, p. 11]. The capabilities of influencing perceptions, attitudes and behaviors as well as post-conflict reconstruction assistance should be added to the above.

Multinational military operations to combat terrorism can be carried out in the presence or absence of an insurgency movement, at three stages of deployment that combine offensive, defensive and stability operations: immediate reaction stage; stabilization stage; transfer of authority to the host nation stage. Within these stages neutralization, security and reconstruction operations are carried out, combining offensive, defensive and stability operations in different proportions.

Offensive operations primarily aim at the detection and elimination of terrorist entities while defensive operations – protecting the local population and stability operations, rebuilding infrastructure, restoring legitimacy of local government, establishment of law and order in the area of operations. Their success depends on the ability to meet

¹ Capability – “all the measures and actions including elements of doctrine, organization, control, training/education, endowment/equipment, infrastructure, personnel and interoperability necessary for achieving an objective and obtaining the desired effect”, *Ghidul Strategiei nationale de aparare a tarii pentru perioada 2015-2019*. Bucuresti; 2015, p. 8.

the following requirements: psychological and physical isolation of terrorists from the population; ensuring the conditions for economic, political and social reforms; protection of the population and key infrastructure; providing training and equipping local security forces; ensuring essential services; support for displaced populations and refugees; use and training of local labor force; preventing active and passive support to terrorists and winning popular support.

Conclusions

The analysis of the research on the fight against terrorism highlighted that preventing and combating terrorism have become a top priority of the civilized world, this battle meaning conducting concerted political, economic, banking and financial, informational, military and media action for understanding the causes and its spiritual springs, sources and available resources, organizational structures, relationship system and vulnerabilities that can be exploited in order to gain this confrontation.

Like any lasting conflict involving domestic and international armed forces, the fight against terrorism and insurgency marks the activity of military structures and functioning of government agencies involved and of internal host nation's institutions. To combat large-scale terrorism, military structures of states contributing with forces are included in the composition of some multinational forces, with which one can learn if security forces of the host nation also have the necessary capabilities. Also, in these operations, the support of the population of the area of operations is very important and also the support given by the various agencies of the host nation, other agencies, governmental, tribal and private organizations in the operations' area or international.

Involvement in the conduct of military stability operations, and within these, the combat missions against terrorism as well, various organizations and government agencies and NGOs, requires that the training of forces also focuses on adapting procedures to actionable interoperability requirements and training and development of cooperation and coordination ability with organizations and agencies concerned.

In counter-terrorism operations, military forces must meet several requirements whose solution is critical to the effectiveness and success of the operation, and here we particularly have in mind: making an effective control system; implementing an information system that can collect data from national and/or multinational sources and being able to disseminate necessary information to all partners; overcoming the effects of national limitations regarding the employment of forces and approaches for implementing a logistics system that meets the needs of national concerns, but that also support multinational needs.

Legal barriers affect the effectiveness of operations to combat terrorism particularly through restrictions of international humanitarian law, speculated frequently by terrorist entities to conceal their presence and mask their actions, knowing that any losses caused by military forces to the civilian population can immediately be denounced in the eyes of the public opinion as war crimes.

Difficulties in adapting a military body to the confrontation with terrorist entities represent an important factor that affects the efficiency of these operations, because it imperatively calls for the involvement of other structures and agencies in the effort to create the documentation base prior to the mission.

Within the concept of integrated and comprehensive approach, under all aspects – military and civilian ones, to the stabilization and reconstruction of states affected by terrorism and internal conflicts, planning and conducting operations to combat terrorism take place in a multidimensional environment, which has specific unexpected challenges for both military structures participating in such operations and non-military organizations that have an increasingly important role. This comprehensive approach requires structures of military forces to use a range of tools, to work with different actors and to effectively combine different methods of political, civil and military action to achieve the objectives set in the fight against terrorism and generate effects that define a desired end state.

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Conflict of interests

All authors declared no conflict of interests.


Author contributions


All authors contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Biographical notes

Danut-Eugeniu Mosteanu – PhD, Professor Engineer, member, of the Chemists' Association of Romania (The Romanian Chemical Society) and of SAMRO (The Romanian Academic Society of Management). My scientific research, materialized in the form of articles presented at national and international events or conferences or journals (120), scientific books (7), university courses (8), research projects (12), focused on CBRN defense, advanced logistics, development of e-learning capabilities in the Army, project management research. A special aspect of my scientific research was the creation of a modern laboratory for chemical analysis and instrumental CBRN defense, the result of a scientific research project won at national level.

Dorin Ionita – BG, Commander of the Operational Land Forces Component and Deputy Chief of the Romanian Land Forces Staff. He is deeply involved in the elaboration of doctrines, military standards and procedures. In his field of expertise, being aware of the global security challenges and threats, he is informed with the latest research findings and based on my personal professional experience as active participant in missions in the international theatres of operations. He wrote scientific studies and articles for national and international conferences, presenting the best solutions for training and engaging of the forces against various threats.

Wkład struktur wojskowych w udział w walce z terroryzmem

STRESZCZENIE

Terroryzm, poprzez charakteryzującą go przemoc, jest jednym z najpoważniejszych zagrożeń dla współczesnej cywilizacji i globalnego porządku, czyni bezpieczeństwo jednostki i społeczeństwa bardziej wrażliwym zarówno w kraju, jak i na arenie międzynarodowej. Walka z terroryzmem wiąże się nie tylko z wyzwaniem dla sił zbrojnych zajmującymi się kwestiami związanymi z legitymizowaniem legalności w relacjach w stosunku do ludności z obszaru objętego operacją wojskową czy w odniesieniu do osób zaangażowanych lub wspierającymi akty terrorystyczne, ale także wiąże się z odpowiedzialnością za przestrzeganie zasad demokracji, godności człowieka i jego podstawowych praw. Kwestie związane z udziałem struktur wojskowych w walce z terroryzmem nie są niczym nowym. Nowością natomiast jest jednak perspektywa świadomego i dojrzałego podejścia do ryzyka i zagrożeń, z jakimi zmagają się siły zbrojne w konfliktach, w które są zaangażowane.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

terroryzm, interwencja wojskowa, kompleksowe podejście, interagencja

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