

'Fighting our mind's creation'

'Reason as a forgotten victim in the 'war on terror''

V. Inozemtsev*

Three years have passed since the fight against international terrorism was identified a task that needed the persistent and coordinated efforts of the entire civilized world. The United States, which was the first country to be attacked by a powerful terrorist group consisting of people from different countries and ethnic groups, was the main advocate of this approach.

When commenting on September 11th 2001, many analysts immediately noted that what had happened in New York and Washington had no historical analogues (this assumption seems quite plausible today) and thus a new period in world history had begun (which is doubtful). Throughout history, terrorism has been used by minority groups fighting for their rights and by proponents of new ideological trends to publicize their beliefs. Despite the fact that the consequences of terrorist acts have at times changed the course of history (there were quite a few such cases, including the opening shot of World War I in

Chechen Republic, April 2000. A battle scene in Chechnya

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, V. Vyatkin)

Sarajevo on June 28, 1914), we must recognize that the actions of terrorists accelerate events rather than cause them.

Our approach is based on the vital necessity of defining terrorism and understanding its causes; and of classifying the various types of terrorist activity. Today, the U.S. State Department, which delivers its annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* reports, defines terrorism as 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence the audience'. If, to follow this definition, we should well exclude from the terrorist activity all attacks on U.S. and coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as all assaults by Chechen rebels on Russian militarymen inside Chechnya. And it will be right to do so, since in that case all our understanding of the 'war on terror' becomes quite different from today's.

For a long time terrorism, as a rule, was confined to a particular country and the terrorists' goals were clear. The members of Narodnaya Volya (a



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The editorial office of the *Militaire Spectator* wants to thank Mr. A. Poskakukhin of RIA-Novosti for his mediation and further help during the realization of this article.

revolutionary network in 19th-century Russia, who assassinated the Tzar Alexander II in 1881) believed that autocracy could be overthrown only through regicide. The ultra-leftist groups in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s and the revolutionary fanatics in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s sought to destabilize the regimes they deemed to be reactionary and corrupt. Algerian rebels, respon-

sible for a series of bloody killings in France during the 1950s and 1960s, fought for their country's independence; similar goals are pursued by the Basques in Spain and the IRA in Britain. Palestinian terrorists up from 1970s, as well as the Chechen rebels during the past ten years, perpetrated terrorist attacks to oust the armed forces of Israel and Russia from their native lands.

Even the most horrific acts of terror, such as the murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972, were carried out within the framework of the Palestinians' struggle against Israeli occupation. Thus, for quite a while, the only reason for terrorism to become 'international', was the oppressed people's struggle for independence. Examples of this type (with reservations) can be found in





Grozny, Chechen Republic. This man fought for Chechen illegal paramilitary formations

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, I. Mikhalev)

the history of the anti-colonialist movement or say, the Afghans' partisan war against Soviet troops, which lasted for more than a decade between 1979 and 1989.

Useless stereotypes

The attacks on New York and Washington differed greatly from all previous cases seen by politicians and special services. Therefore, to be able to analyze this phenomenon and the methods used to combat it, one must abandon several stereotypes that are common in a traditional approach to terrorism.

One should admit, that terror becomes international in character not because terrorist attacks are carried out in different regions of the world, but because the members of terrorist organizations are not citizens of any coun-

try, a certain ethnic community, or even a coherent and well organized group.

Besides, one should take into consideration that in today's world the diverse types of individuals and the heterogeneous groupings do not have, and can hardly have, any long-term political programs. Most likely, they are united by certain religious dogmas and therefore it can be assumed that the current form of international terrorism will not evolve into some consolidated and well-managed movement.

Finally, one should understand that terrorist organizations are largely modeled on the flexible network structures implemented in the Western business corporations during the 1990s which are much more efficient than

the traditional corporate structure practiced by national armies and security services.

All these circumstances define the specific features of a strategy to counter global terrorist networks that are regrettably given little attention today.

In my opinion, the most important point of this strategy will be a clear identification of terrorists and rejection of some broad generalizations based, for instance, on the fact that most members of terrorist groups are Muslim. All speculations about Islamic and even Arab terrorism must be recognized as invalid and dangerous because the situation seems to be much more complex. Propagating a negative view of Muslims or Arabs to the public at large may lead to a rise in nationalism and religious and racial hatred.

Thus, we need to adhere to the defensive wait-and-see tactic in the fight against terrorism. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the majority of special services are incapable of effectively countering the terrorist threat. Consequently, the terrorists' main success is not the number of victims in an attack, but rather the spread of panic and creation of nervousity in a particular country as well as increasing police crackdowns, and the restriction of political freedom. Driven by hatred, not towards individual politicians – who are seldom victims of terror – but for Western freedom, democracy and way of life, terrorists see evidence of their success in the changes taking place right now. Therefore, the more 'ensuring security' dominates the discourse of political leaders, the less security their voters can expect.

Moreover, a clear delimitation between terrorism, a new type of action that is not motivated by any obvious source, and all other types of organized or sporadic violence, is badly needed. Indeed, Chechen militants' attacks on Russian servicemen, the seizure of hostages in Moscow, bombings in Jewish settlements and Israeli cities and even the showy executions of Westerners in Iraq are not the same as hijacking passenger airplanes and using them to attack civilian targets in the United States. There are links between many terrorist organizations and a major task in the fight against terrorism is the destruction of these links, not the consolidation (albeit unintentional) of diverse terrorist groups.

Eventually one should recognize that using the tools and methods of a full-

scale war in the fight against terrorism is counterproductive. There are no countries in the modern world whose governments use terrorism to achieve their goals. From this point of view, it would be wrong and dangerous to associate the problems of terrorism with the issues surrounding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Any military operation would inevitably lead to civilian casualties, which would only strengthen the social base of terrorist movements. Besides, such operations violate the principles of sovereignty and force an increasing number of states to regard the creation of weapons of mass destruction as their only means of ensuring security. And the same time, military actions can only intensify the sense and feeling of danger in Western societies, because effectiveness of such actions in curbing ter-



Grozny, Chechen Republic. Chechen illegal paramilitary formation fighters

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, I. Mikhalev)

rorism is incomparable to the costs of their implementation.

Understanding the causes

An effective strategy of combating modern international terrorism must, in my opinion, be based on a deep understanding of its causes, as well as the recognition of its heterogeneity. The goal of such a strategy is to effectively disintegrate the global terrorist network and subsequently to destroy it.

The fundamental reasons for the rise of the present wave of terrorism lie, on the one hand, in the failure of Western leaders (political leaders of Israel and Russia may well fit into this category) to develop relations with other cultures. On the other hand they lie in the recognition by fundamentalists of the threat of an inevitable Westernization of the entire world. Thus, terrorism is caused by the passion of the

weak, or by the desperation of the impotent. Of course, the reality is a strange combination of both, but in order to combat terrorism effectively these two extremes must be clearly defined.

As for the absolute approach, the passion of the weak is the encroachment of the rights of ethnic, national and religious groups, though such encroachment has never been a liberal value. The terrorism caused by this encroachment is directed not as much against the foundations of the liberal Western world order as against Western countries selectively applying these principles.

This selectiveness is dictated principally by political considerations. Consequently, the main way to counter this type of terrorism is to search for mutually acceptable solutions to the existing problems, such as ones we have with Palestinians or Chechens.

Naturally, this search should be based on the assumption that territorial integrity and borderlines on the maps are not worth hundreds and thousands of human lives.

Western, as well as Russian, politicians must realize that any protracted military conflict which may be associated with one waged on national or ethnic reasons will inevitably transform itself into essentially ideological conflict, which turns an anomaly into practice. If the population of such territories as Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya and Palestine are, or will be, in a state of constant violence long enough for the new generation (or worse still, several generations) to be involved into unstoppable fighting, hostility towards a specific enemy will turn into hatred towards all countries and nations which may be associated with the enemy. It is not by chance that Russian soldiers in



Russian rangers during a drill in Moscow (Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, V. Vyatkin)



Trained dogs and their handlers, on the Moscow metro staff, check rolling stock

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, D. Korobeinikov)

Chechnya are killed by Palestinians and Jordanians, i.e., citizens of the countries that the Soviet Union supported for decades in their fight against Israel or the planners of the attacks on American cities were devised by individuals who received generous supplies of money and weapons from the United States during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

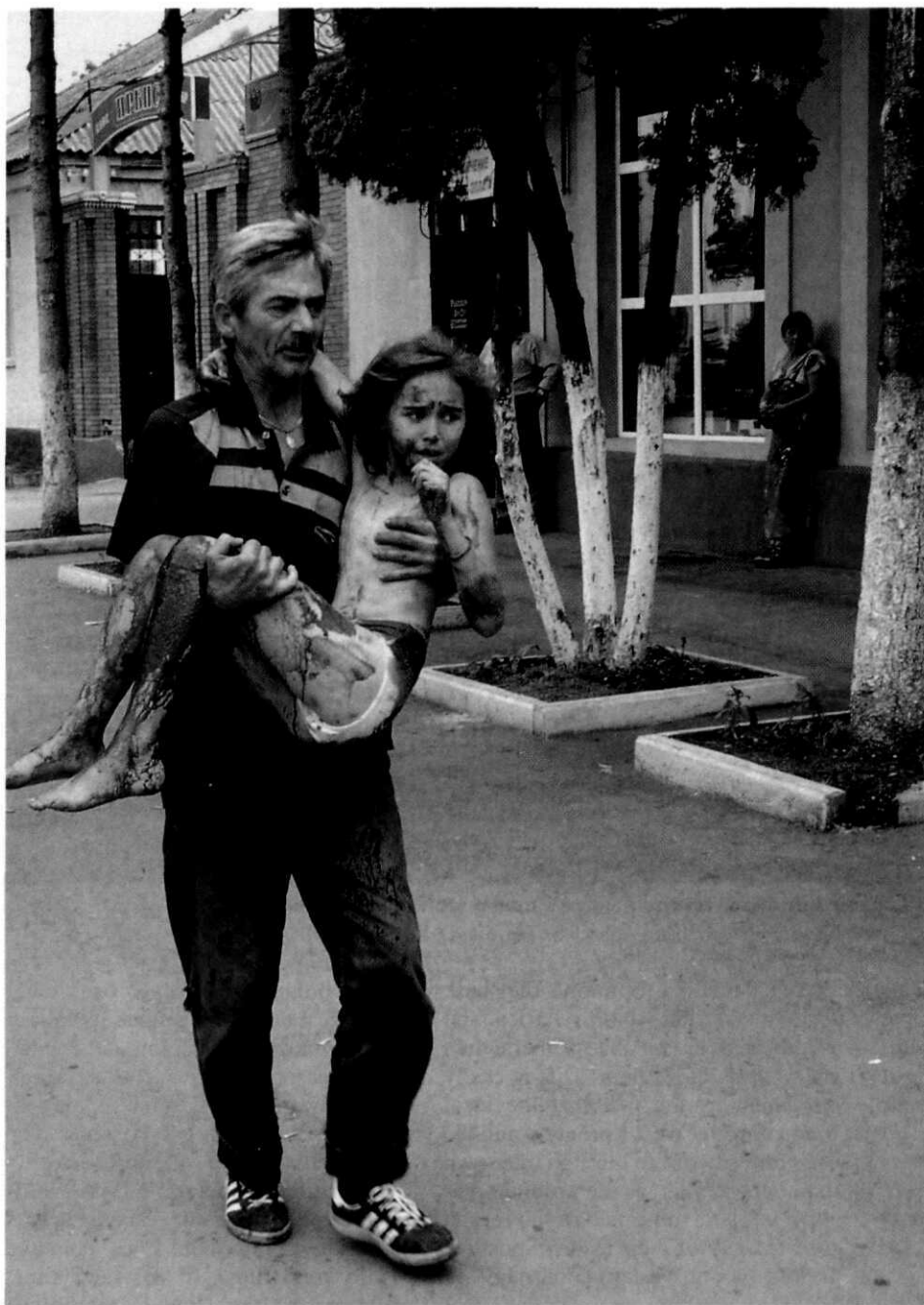
In its pure form, the desperation of the impotent has the potential to create a much more complex and dangerous situation. In this situation, people who do not want to rebuild their life or society in the West's image oppose the West. They are often, and not without some reason, called fanatics. The problem, however, is not their mentality, but their actual number. I believe that Western politicians are seriously mistaken about this point. Contrary to the

well-established opinion, the bulk of the people in North Africa and Middle East are much less liberal than their 'illiberal' leaders. This is easily explained by the fact that the local elite know the West's progress and the Western way of life through their own experience, whereas the absolute majority of their subjects have no reason to share any of their leaders' positive feelings about Western countries.

It is impossible to curb this type of terrorism by concessions and negotiations. However, the resolution of local conflicts, as well as a steep decline in the number of the West's attempts to reform quickly the foundations of Middle Eastern societies through so called 'nation-building' efforts, could become the first steps in this direction. If Western traditions are alien to them, they should be allowed to live

in accordance with their own faith. The West also must reduce its military presence in the region and coordinate measures aimed at cutting military hardware and weapon supplies to countries in this part of the world. The West should also stop broadcasting Western television and radio in local languages and forget about profits from the selling there Coca-Cola and Hollywood films. At the same time, Europe and the United States must gradually apply more strict immigration rules, reject the vicious practice of multiculturalism and prevent the formation of ethnic communities in Western countries. A certain part of the world is not ready to absorb Western values, and this fact must be admitted and accepted.

For sure, this is a hard point to be adopted, because it shakes the very



Hostages rescued in the Beslan school terror act

(Photo Russian News and
Information Agency RIA Novosti,
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claration of Human Rights? Should we expect that people, who actually do not want to be free, will embrace the notion of freedom which was nurtured in the Western countries for two millennia? Today's societies are diverse, and they need a diversified approach. The time of the Universal Declaration will definitely come. But it will not happen in the nearest future.

Measures

In any case, the fight against terrorist attacks in Western countries must be uncompromising and targeted. Today, terrorists cannot target major facilities in the United States or Europe without physically entering these areas. Therefore, this type of terrorism cannot be regarded as anything other than a crime organized by individuals or groups, and the fight against it must be carried out in the same way international organized crime is combated: following the suspects and their contacts, enhancing control over the funding of suspicious organizations, introducing secret services' agents into terrorist organizations and exchanging data with law-enforcement agencies in other countries.

All these measures have only one objective: to transform the problem of terrorism from a military-political (which it is now) into a legal problem. This change is the only way to get meaningful results.

Even a superficial glance at the present state of affairs shows that the process of the fight against terrorism

foundation of the idea of the universal character of Western values. Such an approach clearly opposes the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948. But if the reality runs against dogma, than the reality, not the dogma, must be counted. One must admit that a lot of prerequisites of the modern system of international

relations are nothing more than myths and phantoms. What sovereignty can we talk about if addressing the problems of nations being not states but 'ungovernable chaotic entities,' if using Oswaldo de Rivero's words? What provision of human rights can we await from the government of Saudi Arabia, who was (and still is) not a signatory to the Universal De-

has acquired a different dynamic. Since the war on terror began, three years ago, there has been no news of the arrest and conviction of the most infamous terrorist leaders. The scale and geography of terrorist attacks are expanding; in 1999 only 940 people were reported killed in terrorist attacks, on 2000 – 1211 people, in 2002 – 2688, in 2004 – more than 3000 persons perished, not counting the losses of lives by soldiers and other servicemen. At the same time the methods to combat terrorism have become more and more hysterical and increasingly less professional. One may be ensured in this vision on how Russian special services managed the hostage-takings crises in Moscow in October, 2002 and in a school of a North-Ossetian town of Beslan in September, 2004.

American embassies throughout the world have adopted more stringent visa issuance policies although it's an open secret that about 300.000 illegal immigrants cross into the United States from Mexico each year. After losing about 3.000 people on September 11, 2001, the Western world responded by invading Afghanistan and Iraq, and the losses incurred from both wars (including the victims of the Madrid bombing on March 11, 2004) have nearly reached the number of 9/11 casualties. The result of these wars, however, is more than doubtful, even if we ignore the fact that many people have lost their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children and grandchildren and perhaps soon will not reject a proposal to blow themselves up along with a Russian or American military patrol or

hijack another plane reminiscent of 9/11 – something close to what actually happened in Russia in August, 2004 when two airplanes that left Moscow bound to Rostov and Volgograd, were simultaneously bombed by Chechen suicide hijackers.

Criminals, not enemies

Terrorism is a crime against humanity. Terrorists are criminals, not enemies and by treating terrorists like criminals, the politicians that oppose them play the roles of prosecutors and judges. By treating terrorists like enemies, the politicians assume the role of criminal bosses settling large scores. In the first case, the politicians are required to heed arguments and proceed from evidence and in the second, they follow their emotions and divide the world into friends and foes.



Moscow, July 2003. A terror act during an open-air rock concert in Tushino

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, A. Kolyaga)



Moscow, September 1999.
Search-and-rescue works on what was a residential house in Guryanov Street after a terror blast

(Photo Russian News and Information Agency RIA Novosti, D. Korobeinikov)

Throughout history, different people – philosophers, politicians and scholars – viewed certain events as the beginning of a new period, a turning point in history or a portent that only their generation could see. However, as a rule, most of these events were imagined rather than actual historical events. We measure history from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment and are enthralled by beginning of a new millennium, an era that was marked by the triumph of one myth over another. We seek the causes of religious wars (strange as they are for a modern man) that took hundreds of thousands of lives. Human foresight or a flash of intellectual energy has only rarely given the world peace and solidarity instead of war and mutual hatred. It was only too often that adherence to abstract ideals and devotion to God created hatred and pain for man. This vicious practice must be revised today. Today, as never before, we must learn the great philosophical truth that the real antipode of love is indifference, not hatred.

Terrorists, no doubt, do not deserve love, but, one might contend, they do not deserve hatred either. Despise is the only feeling they can expect from the civilized world. Minoru Yamasaki, the renowned Japanese architect who designed New York's twin towers, went down in history as a man who designed and built one of the most remarkable architectural structures of the 20th century. Mohammad Atta, the Arab terrorist who supposed to be in the cockpit of one of the two American Airlines jetliners which crashed into them, will be remembered as a man who destroyed it. Thus committing one of the greatest 'acts of art' in contemporary history (as some Western philosophers have openly dubbed the attack). His 'self-realization' cost the civilized world no less than \$400 billion, which was spent on the 'war on terror' in recent years.

This money would be enough to immunize the developing world against the six of the most dangerous infectious diseases; ensure \$2 a day for food for every African living below that level; ensure access to fresh water for some a hundred million people or more; and train 3 million doctors according to best American standards.

However, these funds were used to build a monument to a handful of fanatics who managed to draw man-

kind into a race for one of the most dubious illusions – security.

Is it not time to stop this race and continue to improve our own societies irrespective of whether they are liked or not by those who should be left in peace in their mountains and huts? If they do not like this world, do they not have the right to exclude themselves from it? ██████████

Mayor sources used

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(RIA Novosti)

Rectificatie

In het meinummer, MS (174) 2005 (5), blz 215 staat een foto met het onderschrift: 'Duitse troepen bij Warschau 1939'. Twee attente lezers reageerden. Zowel kolonel KLu J. de Graauw, als kolonel KL D. W. Hoekendijk wezen erop dat op de wegwijzer de afstand naar Warschau 347 km was. Dit is niet echt nabij. Laatstgenoemde, eerder defensie-attaché in Warschau, deed wat nader onderzoek. Met behulp van een Poolse

militaire atlas over de defensieve oorlog in 1939 en de wegenatlas is de locatie van deze kruising terug te vinden op de route tussen Koscierzyna (in het zuidwesten) en Gdynia (in het noordoosten aan de Golf van Gdansk, de belangrijkste Poolse marinehaven in 1939), de huidige weg nummer 220, en wel in de omgeving van het oord Egiertowo. De afgebeelde Duitse eenheid beweegt zich derhalve in noordelijke richting, nog verder weg van Warschau,

naar het stadje Kartuzy. De foto geeft naar zijn mening een logistieke eenheid van een gemotoriseerde infanterie-eenheid weer. De Poolse militaire atlas geeft aan dat het mogelijk delen betreft van de 207 Infanterie Divisie, in opmars over inmiddels bezet Pools gebied in de Corridor van Danzig. Deze divisie heeft de zuidelijke aanval op Gdynia uitgevoerd. Dank voor deze reacties!

De hoofdredacteur