FROM COLD WAR TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

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Abstract: The international order emerged from the end of Cold War had among their main features: a revitalization of separatist policies in different nations. A radicalisation of conflicts in the Middle East. Nuclear proliferation of non nuclear countries and an increase of international terrorism represented by non-state actors with a potential capacity of acquiring CBRN weapons.

Keywords: treaties, modern age terrorism, CBRN weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers, radiological and nuclear terrorism

1. Introduction

From the beginning of the 1960s and due to the increasing growing of terrorism, several have been the official attempts to enhance international cooperation among countries and thus different multinational conventions, treaties and agreements have been established in order to combat this practice.¹ So far, they have proven to be inefficient.

One of the questions debated in the United Nations are the semantics of what is and is not terrorism. In February 2000 this organization published the L/2943 Resolution of the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism with the statements of different participant countries. Among the statements, it was said that was necessary to find an international acceptable criterion to distinguish terrorism from national struggle of people against foreign occupation.²

Among the several approaches given so far about the concept of terrorism, Dr. Stephen Sloan establishes five different perspectives: Terrorism

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as (1) Psychological Weapon: To create a state of fear. (2) Form of Communication: To attract public attention. (3) Form of Criminality: It is a criminal fact. (4) Form of Political Warfare: As a major threat to stability of governments and states. (5) Form of Warfare: A new and first line way of conflict. (6) Strategy in a New Type of Warfare: Terrorism as tool-weapon used by big and small states to modify international policy.3

All of them have proven to be right.

2. Historical Background

The present threat of international terrorism lies in the base of a long history of this coercive practice that had a period of maximum activities during the decades of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, being Europe and the Middle East two of the most affected areas. During those decades, several terrorist groups were internationally connected by sharing cooperation, safe haven, logistical support and training camps and tactics.

In Western Europe both ideological and separatist extreme positions led to the emerging of different organizations which were a major threat to stability and brought tragic consequences to democratic nations. In the ideological aspect, the opposition to the USA and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) policy formed an Anti Imperialist Allied Front5 and was the reason for existing of groups which acted in Germany such as the Red Army Faction and the Baader-Meinhof 6 Gang; in Italy with the Red Brigades; in France with the Direct Action and in Belgium with the Combatant Communist Cells.

All the above-mentioned European terrorist groups disappeared years ago.

In the field of separatist terrorism both the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Ireland and the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain are the most representatives. However, on July 28, 2005 the IRA Army Council announced the end to its armed campaign and stated that it would follow their political goals by means of peaceful actions.7

As long as Spain is concerned, ETA continues its terrorist activities being its last criminal action the explosion of a bomb that destroyed the parking lot of Terminal 4 at the International Airport Madrid-Barajas on December 30, 2006.8 The explosion caused by 200 kg of explosives killed two Ecuadorian citizens and injured 36 people. The material damage was initially estimated in 30 million Euros.

Related to Latin America, the question presents a rather big complexity since some of these insurgent groups have been seen as revolutionary