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REVIEW ARTICLE

ISIS: A NEW DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

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ABSTRACT

In the study of the Islamic State, it can be assumed that it adds a new type of objective, a political and religious objective. This goal adds the sovereign aspect of the religious-ideological objective. Future researchers of terrorism must understand that there is a new goal for terrorism in the world – the integration between a separatist-ethnic goal and a religious-ideological goal. In other words, terrorism in the 21st century no longer strives to remove a foreign presence or to establish a regular state recognized by the United Nations but to establish political sovereignty on an ancient-religious background on the global level (regardless of ethnic affiliation).

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is fundamentally violence planned out of political motives and performed by groups and individuals on the subnational level or by secret agents at the national level towards targets that are primarily civilian and with the goal of influencing public opinion. It does this through threat. In the modern era, terror has been employed as a distinct method of warfare after rural guerilla warfare encountered difficulties. Terror in its present political form comes from the failure of guerilla warfare. While guerilla warfare used terrorism towards representatives of the government to instill fear in people and impose on them discipline, it was not the center point in the warfare. As aforementioned, terrorism as combat was at its beginning given the name of honor 'urban guerilla' warfare¹. Terror enables a small group of fighters to draw to their actions attention beyond their size. This form of warfare requires few means and can be performed by a few people, so that its combatants can emphasize their complaint or message for the public in that country or for global public opinion².

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Phillips (1968) defines terrorism as the "direct attack on innocent people with the intention to change dramatically a certain political or social situation". Thornton (1973) defines terrorism as the "symbolic action intended to influence the political behavior through unusual means, including the use of violence or the threat to use violence". Wilkinson (1979) defines terrorism as "coercive intimidation", which includes the threat of murder, harm, or destruction, so as to frighten a certain target until it capitulates to the request of the terrorists³. The definition of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations) of the term 'terror' is "the use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government in furtherance of any political or social objective"⁴. As previously stated, the assumption is that terror is not violence for its own sake but a mode of political action. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the goals for which terrorist actions are intended and their political significance. All the researchers cited here concur that terror attempts to sow fear and anxiety and to achieve the terrorists' objectives so as to generate a certain political-social change⁵.

³Tamar, Herman, "Protest to Terror", In: *From Bottom Up: Social Movements and Political Protest*, Tel Aviv: The Open University, Volume 3, 1997, pp. 9, 18-19, 20-24.

⁴FBI, Analysis of terrorist incident in U.S, 1982. www.higginscte.org/terrorism/FBI%201986.pdf

⁵Tamar, Herman, "Protest to Terror", In: *From Bottom Up: Social Movements and Political Protest*, Tel Aviv: The Open University, Volume 3, 1997, p. 35.

¹Harkavi, Yehoshaphat, 1990, *War and Strategy*. (Tel Aviv: Maarchot Press).

²Netanyahu, Binyamin (ed.), 1987, *Terror – How Can the West Win?* (Tel Aviv: SifriatPoalim).

The institutional definition of terror is important, since it serves the governmental organizations that fight against terror. Thus, for instance, the United States Department of Defense defined in the year 1983 that an act of terrorism will be defined as such only when it is performed by a 'revolutionary organization'⁶.

The academic community considers the following three dimensions of terrorism:

Political-social goal. Terror with the goal of changing the regime (Harkavi & Segal, 1990). The trend is for the most part left and revolutionary but also can be neo-fascists. The life span of these organizations is generally short, and there is considerable organizational turnover⁷.

Separatist-ethnic goal. Terror that strives to change a border or establish a state. This terrorism is different from terrorism with the goal of extorting protection money, for example⁸. Since these organizations represent an ethnicity and a nation, even if only a small part of them, their life span is longer⁹.

Religious-ideological goal. A conflict that derives from the conflict of different religions or an ideology that aspires to have a certain religion control others. This category includes the terrorism of the IRA in North Ireland, which created in the framework of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics, the global fundamentalist terrorism of Al-Qaeda, which is directed against the Christian and Jewish world and their allies in the Muslim world, and the Islamic State that fights most of the other religions that are not extreme Sunnism. It is also possible to note the part of the terrorist organizations fighting against Israel, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad, which espouse a holy Islamic word (jihad) against the Jews in Israel¹⁰.

The Islamic state – Change of the objectives of terrorism

In the study of the Islamic State, it can be assumed that it adds a new type of objective, a political and religious objective. This goal adds the sovereign aspect of the religious-ideological objective. The Islamic State is a radical Sunni Islamic terrorist organization that split from Al-Qaeda and conquered extensive areas in Syria and Iraq. It also operates in additional countries. The organization defines itself as the Sunni Islamic Caliphate. The organization was established in the 1990s, and in the year 2004 it joined the main Al-Qaeda organization in Afghanistan and was known as 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq'. In 2014, following differences in opinion between the main leadership of Al-Qaeda and the commanders of the organization in the field,

they disconnected from Al-Qaeda and became an independent organization called 'Daesh'¹¹. The leader of the organization, as of the year 2016, is Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. The organization under him participates in the fighting in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. At the end of June 2014 the organization proclaimed the establishment of an independent Islamic Caliphate in the territories under its control and shortened its name to the 'Islamic State', a change that indicates its aspirations that grew and are no longer limited geographically. In addition, it proclaimed that all Muslims around the world must obey Al-Baghdadi, who was declared the Caliph. The organization is infamous worldwide after it published on the Internet films in which it presented its members beheading victims kidnapped by the organization and murdering (through guns) citizens and soldiers in Iraq and Syria. The existence of the Islamic State brings a new objective to global terror: the establishment of a state on the land of a state based on an ancient religious ideology from the seventh century¹². The Islamic State very rapidly established infrastructures in Iraq for the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. One of the senior officers stated that: "They want to reach a religious regime that is all encompassing and they are against everything that is modern and liberal... Daesh already established a Ministry of the Interior, a Ministry of Finance, Welfare, care, schools, bakeries, and even a police."¹³ The State produced an official passport for its residents and internal reports that discuss the realization of its objectives. In Mosul a curriculum adjusted to the policy of the Caliphate was implemented. The curriculum does not include the humanities but does include scientific studies (without certain theories such as Darwin's theory and others). On the streets the names of Christian schools were changed, and in addition a group of women take part in the brigades in Syria and examine that the laws of Sharia (religious law governing members of the Islamic faith) are properly applied. Their monthly wage is 25,000 Syrian Lira (about \$116 USD). In November 2014 the Islamic State announced the production of coins to be called the Islamic Dinar. On June 29, 2014, Daesh changed its name to the Islamic State and proclaimed the global Caliphate¹⁴. Following the activity of the Islamic State to establish a state with a religious ideology, future researchers of terrorism must understand that there is a new goal for terrorism in the world – the integration between a separatist-ethnic goal and a religious-ideological goal. In other words, terrorism in the 21st century no longer strives to remove a foreign presence or to establish a regular state recognized by the United Nations but to establish political sovereignty on an ancient-religious background on the global level (regardless of ethnic affiliation).

⁶Ibid., pp. 20-24.

⁷Harkavi, Yehoshaphat, 1990, *War and Strategy*. (Tel Aviv: Maarchot Press).

⁸Harkavi, Yehoshaphat, 1990, *War and Strategy*. (Tel Aviv: Maarchot Press).

⁹Harkavi, Yehoshaphat, 1990, *War and Strategy*. (Tel Aviv: Maarchot Press).

¹⁰ Philip P. Purpura (2007). *Terrorism and homeland security: an introduction with applications*. Butterworth-Heinemann. pp. 16–19.

¹¹Gambhir, Harleen (February 2015). *ISIS Global Intelligence Summary: January 7 – February 18 (Report)*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War.

¹²Naji, Abu Bakr (23 May 2006). *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass*. John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. Retrieved 20 November 2015.

¹³Case, Roy, 2014, *The Most Extreme that There Is: From Here the Terrorist from Brussels Came*, retrieved from the website Ynet, June 3.

¹⁴Naji, Abu Bakr (23 May 2006). *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass*. John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. Retrieved 20 November 2015.