

Characteristics of terror-threats in goods transportation

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The elements of the traffic system are frequently targeted by terror groups. In the course of the author's researches, managed to get onto the statement that the terror-threat on public transport is higher than on the transport of goods. It is not possible to underestimate the risk of terrorist attacks against the freight systems even there were no multitudinous casualties or serious material harms yet. The article deals the general features of the terror-threat on the freight systems.

Introduction

Transport of goods and terrorism are such a words that used quite often in a people's daily life. Almost in every day we meet with products manufactured far from our home. Already sounds like a cliché that the business processes changed radically and the world economy become globalized. One of the measurable signs of the globalization – that blessed or criticized by many people – is the spreading of the supply chain concept, the fast development of the logistic- and the freight systems. Terrorism is a phenomenon, effects of which we also may confront in every day. It is true that we have to consider terrorist attacks even in our daily life in some countries on the World. Fortunately the population of Hungary is facing the effects of terrorist attacks only from the media reports. Although the consequences of the terror actions are mainly effective on local level, we have to think on this issue also on international level, knowing the regional and global consequences. Even those states cannot leave the terror-threat out of consideration, which are not exposed to the danger of the terrorist attacks directly.

Before we go into the details of the terror-threat in the freight systems, it is necessary to go through on the experiences of the terrorist attacks in the traffic system until now and the general features of the terrorism of our age.

Features of the modern-age terrorism

Terrorism can be defined as a phenomenon which is existing from the beginning of the human history. In the international and Hungarian literature the development of the so-called modern-age terrorism was put onto the scientific articles in the years of '60s at

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the end of the past century and mainly linked to the airplane hijacks. Since then – in these 40 years – the definition of terrorism went through on a considerable change. Terrorism is already considered as an emphasized risk factor that jeopardizing the world's safety. Nobody is in an easy situation, who would like to clarify the conceptual definition, what terrorism really means. Innumerable interpretations were already revealed in connection with the terrorism.

Researchers who examine the terror-threat with scientific fastidiousness and methods, or specialists who deal with the function of terrorist organisations professionally, suggest the acceptance of three very important criteria between the innumerable definitions of the terrorism:

1. application of the violence, or the threat with it;
2. political aims behind terrorist attacks;
3. in the course of terror actions get the personal and financial safety of civilians into danger (BARKER, 2003).

The acceptance of these common factors can be important political and methodological questions in regards of related research methods connected to the terrorism, in examination of the functions of terrorist organisations and in content determining of the tasks of fight against the terrorism.

If we shortly characterize the terrorism nowadays, than we have to take some fundamental features into consideration without the claim of the completeness. In the past decade we could be the witnesses of the network-like organization of terror groups. We can not talk about worldwide and autocrat terrorist organizations – this statement is true even for al-Kaida – but we can do it from global terrorism point of you. Mainly because there are no any area on the world that terrorists would not jeopardize. Despite this the risk factors of terror-threat can not considered on a same way in all around the world. If we evaluate the most important tendencies of the international terrorism than we have to accept the statement that terrorists generally attack targets of which can be wounded easily. We can also see that their methods degenerated in the latter years.

A valid and obvious question can be raised: what kind of targets the terrorists jeopardize? Based on the experiences of the terrorist attacks executed in the previous years we can say that the selection of the possible targets is moving on a very wide scale. Because of this fact it is difficult to define properly the threatened groups and objects. If we trace the media reports than easy to recognize that the victims of the terrorist acts can be politicians, administrative employees, policemen, religious and ethnic groups, tourists, passengers of traffic vehicles or even innocent passers-by. The scenes of terrorist attacks are showing also a diverse picture, it can be expanded to strictly protected governmental, administrative, police and military objects, public places (e.g. shopping centres, ancient

monuments, places having fun, churches, traffic terminals, vehicles, etc). The grouping of the possible targets is also not an easy task. Researches proved that terror groups assign their targets from definable and totally randomly selected persons and objects. State officials, administrative infrastructures and sovereign power activity belong to the focused targets which can be defined relatively easily. In the selection of the second target group – beside the relatively small effort – the potential achievement of a bigger effect is the key selection criteria. (HORVÁTH, 2006/a).

Considerable changes happened in the organizational models of the terrorism from the beginning of years 1960. Today we still can not talk only about international terrorism. True that there are close cooperation between the terror groups in the areas like trainings, logistic and organizing of the terror actions, but it is rather an organizational procedure – and primarily in case of al-Kaida –, a gradual extension of franchise-method (TÁLAS, 2007). The terror groups -beside the rules of the severe conspiracy- are adapting the multinational marketing and leadership methods.

In connection with the studies of the terrorism it would be a mistake to focus only on the Islamic fundamentalism. Based on the experiences of group based activities we can come to a conclusion that terrorist organisations – facing the earlier European extreme left-wing organisations – wishing to modify not only the western social system, but also to eliminate the overall western culture and a lifestyle (ROSTOVÁNYI, 2002). Despite this, it would be a mistake asserting equality between the Islam religion and the terrorism, even then, if in the past decade we have been undoubtedly witnesses of the Islamic extreme terror groups' strengthening.

General features of the traffic system's terror-threat

In the past decades not only the airports, airplanes and the urban public transport systems were threatened by terrorist attacks, but also the vehicles of the long-distance surface and sea passenger transport. In the same period the public characters, the protection of particularly endangered objects went through on spectacular development, thus the terrorist attacks against politicians and public institutions have a much bigger risk than decades before. The terrorist groups, thanks to the increased safety measures, continually rather plan and execute attacks against the so called "soft" targets. Security experts in the United States are enumerating the traffic junctions, together with the public places, synagogues and hotels as al-Kaida's potential and easily attacked first targets (LIBICKI ET AL., 2007).

The statement that the traffic is one of those areas that can be wounded easily in war is a frequently used expression, as the traffic's service and operating features demand

high infrastructural and device requirements. Because of the same features we can enumerate the elements of the traffic system in peacetime onto the catastrophe-sensitive areas. The effects of the potential catastrophe situation or a terrorist attack may not only come locally, but in a mid-short term may disable the traffic on regional level, a bigger part of a country or all of the country. A provisional falling out of the traffic network due to the damages may hinder the continuous maintenance of the international traffic purely due to geographical reasons. Therefore the analysis of the traffic system's terror-threat requires more wide attention, as its disturbances may effect the areas out of the state-borders (HORVÁTH, 2006/a).

The vulnerability of the traffic system includes the following factors:

- the big numbers of transport terminals of persons and goods;
- overload of infrastructural equipments;
- the length of the traffic lines and its sensitivity for destroying;
- the high number of vehicles and their movements;
- freezing of the traffic control systems;
- size of the traffic.

Airports, railway-, road- and urban public transport terminals, stations, harbours and the transshipment centres were mainly established at the meeting points of different traffic lines. Based on the history and operational experiences on modern-age terrorism we can come to a conclusion, that increasing number of terrorist attacks are focusing on passenger transport, than against the transport of goods. If we compare the terror-threat against infrastructure, buildings and vehicles, than we can see that much more terrorist attacks were directed against the vehicles, than against bridges or tunnels. Targets can be grouped based on its geographical areas. In bigger cities more terror actions are targeted against a traffic objects than in the rural areas (HORVÁTH, 2006/a).

Public transport is a popular target of terror groups. After September 11, 2001. we can find increasing number of cases, that could create great publicity. Just some examples: terrorist attacks against the Moscow underground, Madrid suburban train service, London public transport and suburban train service in Mumbai.

After the attack against World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, British experts expected a similar attack against Great Britain. Most of them agreed that London will be one of the potential coming targets and the attack will be most probably against the underground network. They were true, as the terror action was directed against the London underground network. It was an organizational mistake by terrorists that the explosion happened not in the underground but in a double-decker bus. This terrorist attack against London showed also the asymmetric character of terrorism. According to official statements there were four criminals who organized at least 51 terror cases that

required at least 6 000–8 000 pounds financial power (Intelligence and Security Committee, Report 2006). The assassination and explosion series in London were executed within two weeks are calling our attention on that terrorist groups today are capable to repeat their large-scale terrorist attacks in a metropolis within a short period of time. This has to be evaluated as a novelty and cumulative danger of the modern-age terrorism.

In connection with the terrorism the evaluation of the traffic system is not only important because of the risks of the traffic infrastructure and the transport vehicles, but also are exposed to the increased terror threat. Already proved that in the protection and control of traffic should pay attention on explosives loaded to transport vehicles as it is the most frequently used tool by terrorists. Terrorist groups are preferring hidden bombs into the vehicles.

Features of the terror-threat in freight systems

In spite of the fact that the terrorist attacks against freight systems are on a lower level than in the case of public transport, we must not underestimate its danger. Terrorist attacks against the goods transportation vehicles mean a serious risk for the society and the environment and it is possible to cause serious damages. Vehicles of transport of goods and its terminals can sorted among the targets which can be wounded relatively easily. Because of this, the analysis of the features of the terror-threat is important also on this area.

Apart from the risk factors the other important reason why we have to continuously analyse the features of the terror-threat of the transport of goods is coming from the nature of the terrorism. Terror groups are incalculable by virtue of their aims and their character. The priorities of their target-selection may change quickly and they may count easily on attack to the vehicles and terminals of the transport of goods. This fits into the al-Kaida concept, as it was stated by Osama bin Laden in 2005 in his video message. The great thing was that the terror networks are focusing terrorist attacks against the economy, especially in the United States and its allies (HORVÁTH, 2008). In the globalized international trade network, terror actions against the supply lines, distributor centres may have serious indirect economic effects. Guaranteeing the safety of transport vehicles, routes and infrastructural establishments may require serious material damages in the conveyors, multinational companies, and in the states and international organisations.

To analyse the terror-threat of transport of goods is not an easy task. The examination beside the general and special features of the terrorism suppose in-depth

knowledge of processes in the transport of goods. It requires not only the knowledge of the technical and traffic features, but also the legal regulation of the transport of goods and the tasks of the participating staff in the processes. Without this knowledge the chance for successful terror attack may increase significantly. In transport of goods the control of the whole process and equipments are exceptionally difficult, because the distances between them is really huge.

Container terrorism: danger or hypothesis?

Without the unit cargo composition it wouldn't be possible today to fulfil the freight claims according to the economic requirements. We consider containers as the most important unit cargo composition equipment. Containers are suitable to store materials in great mass and forward it in them. The containers worked up according to the international standards are suitable to be transported on ships, railway carriages and lorries without lengthy transfer operations from sender place entirely to the addressee. Because of the decentralised production, distribution and sales places the magnitude of the container traffic shows a steeply rising tendency in the sea, railway and road traffic. Containers are potential suitable tools for terror groups in their activities. In this way the sea container traffic may mean the greatest danger, because it does not mean difficulty on the open seas to conceal biological, chemical or radiological weapons into the containers.

Sea piracy and terrorism

Sea piracy has already millennial traditions. It cannot be considered as romantic and harmless activity, especially not on South China Sea, Red Sea, in the Malaka pass (BERKI, 2008). Plunder of the seafarer cargo ships on these areas are potential source of income to the terrorist groups. Based on the ship owner claims the International Maritime Bureau in 2003 reported 445 attacks on sea, as a result of which 92 sailors lost his life. Based on these data we have to pay attention on piracy, because these attacks in 2003 were almost doubled compared to the previous year (LUFT & KORIN 2004). On the world's seas the modern-age piracy started in years 1990 became getting worse. Increasing number of attacks draw the attention of international naval authorities and state officials to deal with sea robberies, start to make this threat under control. The risk of the piracy not reduced in the previous five years so it is a must to manage continuously on governmental and international level.

Piracy on the seas

According to the conceptual definition criteria of the terrorism, the fundamental criteria of the terrorist acts is a political objective throughout application of violence. It is not possible to relate this to the steadily increasing piracy in the area close to the Somalian coasts. It is necessary to treat the pirates similarly, than the terrorists because of the strategic significance of the endangered supply lines. True that political claims are not formulated there, but there is real threat on using them as a tool in the international terrorism. The common treatment of the piracy and terrorism is obvious, because of their character and danger.

In the second half of 2008 and in the first half of 2009 did not pass a week without a news on the Somalian pirate attack. By checking the International Maritime Bureau's website we can see data and maps of the ICC Commercial Crime Services (CCS) that may shocking how dangerous to sail on Caribbean sea or near the coasts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Somalia, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Tanzania. International organizations opened a direct link to the effected organisations like shipping companies, ship crews in order to warn them on danger (IMB Report 2009). Because of the cumulative danger of the piracy, the information from ICC Commercial Crime Services can be considered as an every day tool.

Somalian pirates mean the greatest danger and the largest risk in gulf of Aden and in the beachfront areas. According to the official data the number of the pirate attacks were doubled in this area from 2008. until 2008 October attacks There were attacks against 60 ships. According to the announced official communications, the Somalian pirates committed altogether 111 attacks in 2008. From the 92 attacks in Adeni-bay, at least 19 of them happened in the east coasts of Somalia. (ICC, Report 2009).

Pirates specialized on kidnapping in order to ask ransom which can be measured in millions of dollars for the release of captured crew and passengers and for the restitution of ships and goods (MIDDLETON, 2008). Against a World Food Programme the Somalian inhabitants can not ensure their minimal life needs, the central government almost not exists since 1991, means the international efforts on solving the Somalian issue are rather not successful.

The whole country is in a chaos, as the state is not able to fight against the gangs specialized on piracy. The income of pirate groups from ransom, which is paid for them for the rubbed ships. Also the plunder means income for the well organized and equipped groups. Pirates are practically keep under control the distribution of the food and medical cargos in the area of the World Food Programme, which is a further source

of their income (ICG Report 2008). Of course not only the food-aid delivering ships are only in danger, but all the civil passengers and goods transporting ship.

They approach the goods transporting ships relatively easily on their quickly moving ships and boats. The robbers trained well on how to manage the ship robberies relatively quickly, how to keep the ships under control with their crew and how to direct these ships into safe harbours. In 2008 piracy reached such a level that NATO and international organisations could not keep themselves away from this issue. In 2008 October the Somalian pirates demanded ransom already for 26 ships and 250 persons (ICG Report 2008). Even UN Security Council dealt with the case. They sent more warships into the area in order to make sure safety of the sea traffic. According to the available data of the International Maritime Bureau, the UN, EU and NATO efforts can not be considered successful. There is a need for more efficient appearance against the pirates, that would include the destruction of their land bases.

A debate started among the specialists, whether it is allowed to discuss with the pirates or not. True that the finding solution through negotiations is appropriate for the pirates because in this case their aims were partly attained. On the other hand the release of the hostages is risky, altogether an attempt like this entailed complete success, when the captain of Maersk-Alabama, an American container ship managed to set free on 12 April 2009. It seems clear that the pirates increased their activity in 2008, their activity caused serious stops in the ship traffic. The rising insurances of shipping companies may raise the price of their tariff, which may reduce the competitiveness of the sea traffic. The activity of Somalian pirates caused serious economic damages to the shipping and insurance companies, to the commercial companies and already to the states who are participating in defence. According to experts it is not possible to force back the Somalian piracy without the restoration of the central state functions. The efforts on government restoration were rather unsuccessful, one after another miscarried in the last 18 years.

Container terrorism

Political and administrative leaders and safety experts in the United States sincerely deal with the terror-threat of container-ships. According to their opinion the terrorist attacks may sincerely jeopardize the container traffic soon (GREENBERG ET AL., 2006). The risk of this is awarded so high, that when a research teams studied the terror-threat of traffic critical infrastructure of the United States, than Los Angeles and Long Beach harbours were among the six most emphasized possible targets (LIBICKI ET AL., 2007).

The results of the examinations showed shocking results, it turned out that the freight systems hide serious safety risks in the United States.

On what places exists the terror-threat of the container transport most? The container supplier ships are targets which can be wounded easily, the terror actions against them carry out a low risk. It increases the sensibility, that even in the United States currently only 5–7% of the different authorities have opportunity to check the container traffic (LIBICKI ET AL., 2007). As a source of danger of containers on a specific manner is the largest benefits of container transport, that the containers are applicable in more traffic sector (HORVÁTH, 2008).

It is easy to hide weapons in the containers, among others weapons of mass destruction and big strength bombs. These can put into function on ships, in harbours, on public roads and on the railway lines. The weapons of mass destruction, so-called “dirty bombs”, or making up for working of the traditional bombs may endanger near the densely inhabited areas (GREENBERG ET AL., 2006).

Apart from the direct harms, we have to think on the gravity of the secondary consequences. From extent viewpoints, we have to highlight some other consequences as well. The restoration of the traffic vehicles and the infrastructure after a terror attack may cause serious costs. The confidence may significantly decrease against the container transport. The substitution of the containers would cause a considerable extra costs, which can not be covered easily in some sectors of the economy.

The safety measures may get stricter, that follows the increase of the expenses like insurance costs of the transports. It is not allowed to forget, that more thousand people may lose their workplace (LIBICKI ET AL., 2007). The listed consequences affected not only the traffic system, but on an indirect manner also the economic and social life.

Conclusions and things to do

It is not allowed to leave out of consideration the danger of the container terrorism neither in a country like Hungary. In spite of the fact that we are not seaside country, we are affected by the sea container traffic, because containers arrive from the seaports into our homeland as well. Our situation is complicated by the fact that we are not only departure or destination points, but transit country as well, which makes difficult the control of the container traffic. It is not possible to put the problems of the terrorism into a police and military solutions driven issue. Eliminating the resources of terror are global task which can not be solved easily. Till then it is necessary to step forward in the protection of equipments connected to critical infrastructure in the whole Europe, with the adoption of

the methods applied in United States. It would important to pay attention on container terrorism in Europe, not only as a hypothesis, but as a real danger.

According to specialists, it is very difficult to eliminate the reasons of the terrorism. The risk of terror-threat of the goods transport require more attention, against the fact that commercial transport on railway, sea and on road does not belong to the emphasized targets of the terrorism. It is possible to reduce the risk of the terrorist attacks and the piracy only if the states, transport companies and owners of the logistic centers are cooperating on international level. Because of the many characters it is not possible to reduce the risk of the terrorism only with legal, police and military tools. Developing the safety of the transport of goods is a must, as the deliveries are important influencing factors of the world economy due to the globalised business network.

Key words: terrorism, violence of terrorism, transportation security, goods transport, container terrorism, piracy, risk of the piracy, vulnerability.

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