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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION AND DETERRENCE OF SUICIDE BOMBING ATTACKS

Abstract

It is obvious that suicide attacks are not a new phenomenon. However, in the past two decades they have become terrorist's most frequent way of action, and as such they have undoubtedly become the most dangerous modus operandi of modern terrorism. It is obvious that suicide terrorism is just another form of asymmetrical warfare. In order to cope with such an extreme form of violence, we have to be aware of why terrorist organizations recur to that kind of acts and what the causes of it are. When dealing with the occurrence of suicide attacks, security agencies combating terrorists have many tactical options, yet we are witnesses that these options often yield unintended and counterproductive consequences. The purpose of this paper is to find the solution, by ehaviour the pros and cons of existing anti-terrorism procedures, on how security agencies could improve the existing Standard Operating Procedures to prevent or deter suicide attacks, as well as to make them aware of why terrorist organizations resort to suicide bombing and what its root causes are. By reviewing the existing literature, the aim of this paper is also to determine the rationale and the motive of a suicide bomber, and how security agencies can greatly influence the incidence of attacks and find the best way to stop suicide bombers by choosing the anti-insurgent tactics. Understanding the rationale of a suicide bomber provides us with three key advantages which will give us an opportunity for prevention or deterrence of suicide bombing attacks. It also provides us an insight into his motivation, and the tactics and capabilities of the organization that recruited him.

Keywords: terrorism, rationale, motive, deterrence, prevention.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that suicide attacks are not a new phenomenon. Overton (2019) claims that since 1881 and the assassination of Russian Tsar Alexander II by a suicide bomber, until today more than 13.500 suicide attacks have been registered with more than 72.000 people killed. Suicide attackers have been Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Shintoists and Hindus.

Recently the ehaviour of suicide attacks has been in the Middle East where between 1980 and 2017, 3.000 suicide attacks occurred, killing 32.000 and wounding 76.000 people. Overton (2019). Suicide Attacks in the past two decades have become terrorist's most frequent way of action, and as such they have undoubtedly become the most dangerous modus operandi of modern terrorism. Suicide attacks are the weapon of choice of modern terrorist organizations, and they are clearly showing the changing dynamics of postmodern terrorism, Bunker (2006). Hofman (2003) states, that "The suicide attack is the terrorists' "smart bomb". Ganor (2000) claims that "the suicide attacker is no more than a platform that carries the explosive charge to its target. However, this platform can think and, see to it that the explosive charge is detonated at the optimal location and timing so as to create maximum carnage and destruction". (Ganor, 2000)

2. SUICIDE TERRORISM OVERVIEW

The history of suicide terrorism is very long; however for the purpose of this paper we will briefly review suicide terrorist attacks from the year 1982 until 2015. According to the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism Suicide Attack Database during that period of time they have registered a total of 4.625 suicide attacks with 45.936 people killed. Top three countries with the highest number of suicide attacks and human casualties are Iraq with 1938 suicide attack and 20.084 people killed, second is Afghanistan with 10.59 attacks and 4748 people killed, and third is Pakistan with 490 suicide attacks and 6287 people killed. The most active terrorist organizations were also located in the Middle East, top three organizations with the greatest number of victims from suicide attacks are the Islamic State with 424 suicide attacks resulting in 4949 people killed, second place is held by the central organization of al-Qaeda with "only" 20 terrorist attacks which resulted in 3391 people killed, (among them are the victims of 9/11 terrorist attacks), and on the third place are the Afghan Taliban with 665 attacks causing 2925 killed victims. Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism Suicide Attack Database (2015)

3. THE LOGIC BEHIND SUICIDE ATTACKS AND ITS PURPOSE

In order to be able to cope with such an extreme form of violence, first we have to be aware of why terrorist organizations and individuals permanently recur to that kind of acts and what the root causes of it are. Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine Dr Ramadan Abdallah Shallah explains the rationale behind suicide attacks stating that they (Palestinians) do not possess any form of highly sophisticated weapons, on the other side their enemy has the most modern weaponry, and therefore they have nothing that would repel attacks and thuggery against them except the weapon of martyrdom. Suicide terrorism is the weapon of choice of poor and weak. Hisham (2005). Pape (2003) gives us his explanation of the purpose of suicide terrorism by stating that "The main purpose of suicide terrorism is to use the threat of punishment to coerce a target government to change policy, especially to cause democratic states to withdraw forces from territory that terrorists view as their homeland." (Pape, 2003:3) So, from this

statement we can see clearly that suicide terrorism is just another form of asymmetrical warfare, with its logic and goals. So, in order to prevent those violent incidents, we have to realize that the root causes of suicide bombings are embedded in the logic of terrorism itself, it is the most efficient way for spreading fear and anxiety amongst a population and to successfully coerce political concessions from states. (Wiseman, 2012:1)

Pape (2005) found other factors associated with suicide attacks included;

- "the government of the targeted country being democratic and the public opinion of the country playing a role in determining policy;
- a difference in religion between the attackers and occupiers;
- grassroots support for the attacks;
- attackers disproportionately from the educated middle classes;
- high levels of brutality and cruelty by the occupiers and competition among militant groups fighting the occupiers." Pape (2005:92)

Wiseman (2012) states that a suicide attack is a rational conclusion resulting from a terrorist organization's cost-benefit analysis for the following reasons:

- "Suicide attacks are very cheap and effective
- They are less complicated and compromising than other forms of terrorism.
- They guarantee free and wide media coverage.
- Suicide attackers can change their location, timing or target at the last minute, giving them the ability to maximize casualties and devastation, making them the ultimate smart bomb.
- Suicide attacks give the impression that people aren't safe anywhere, thus creating
 a level of anxiety and fear that is not easy to contain." (Wiseman, 2012:1)

4. THE SUICIDE BOMBER RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

If there is a clear and firm political agenda behind suicide attacks, then we cannot claim that those who commit them are totally irrational. Maybe their ratio is completely different from what we expect of a rational person, it is obvious that behind the ultimate self-sacrifice there is a degenerated form of rationality. To enter in the suicide bomber rationale, first we have to ehavio what the motivation for suicide attack is. Contrary to what most people think that a suicide bomber sacrifices himself only for the sake of his religion, the logic behind a suicide attack is much more complex. Hassan (2009) claims that though religion can play a vital role in recruiting and motivating potential future suicide bombers, the driving force is not religion but a mixture of motivations including politics, humiliation, revenge, retaliation and altruism. (Hassan, 2009). To support this opinion we can refer to Pittel and Rübbelke (2009) who in their working paper Decision Processes of a Suicide Bomber argue that "the profiles of suicide attackers are very different as terrorists come from a variety of social, political and religious backgrounds". Furthermore, they claim that

suicide attacker's motivation can be categorized in three main categories, according to the expected effects from the attack: Posthumous effects, Announcement effects and Defection effects. (Pittel & Rübbelke, 2009:3-4)

4.1. Posthumous effects: Rise in the social and monetary status of the attacker's family; immortality of the attacker accomplishment of political, religious and social goals

The Israeli Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies claims that terrorist organizations and states, which support their activities, are providing material rewards and compensation to terrorist operatives, mostly suicide bomber handlers and dispatchers, and to the families of suicide bombers after their deaths. Suicide bombers who agreed to sacrifice their lives knew that the terrorist organization that sent them out would take care of their families financially. Their families did in fact receive significant financial support, generally sums much higher than those received by the families of "ordinary" shaheeds, not to mention the prestige of being related to a suicide bomber. The money served as an incentive for others to join the ranks of the suicide bombers. (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S), 2006:36) Furthermore, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies argues that the promises of immortality of the attacker; accomplishment of political, religious and social goals are also very important motivating factors which drive suicide attackers to commit the attack. According to classic Muslim literature, many advantages and benefits are promised to the ehavio, for example: he extricates himself from the Torments of the Tomb, he is exempt from the terrors of the Judgment Day, he is forgiven for all the sins he committed during his lifetime, he is entitled to recommend that his relatives – up to 70 of them – enter paradise (an important and exceptional privilege in Muslim society) where the men will marry 72 black-eyed virgins (hurriyyat) and the women, each a single ehavio, and he will live in the highest heaven with Allah, who will take care of all his needs, in the presence of the prophet Muhammad and righteous men. (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S), 2006:8).

4.2. Announcement effects: admiration and rise in status of the attacker before the attack

Brooks (2002) claims that the suicide attacker can expect to be changed overnight from a miserable youth without prospects into a celeb, "rock star, a sports hero and a religious idol rolled into one". (Brooks, 2002) Moghadam (2003) supports this opinion adding that, at least in the Palestinian culture that greatly values honor and dignity, becoming a sacrificial victim is one of the highest personal fulfilments as well as a way of recovering the pride lost by the entire community under the degrading occupation by the Israelis. So, the "living martyrs" are regarded with admiration and jealousy by their peers, who may be impatient to join their ranks as soon as possible. (Moghadam, 2003)

4.3. Defection effects: negative consequences arising in case the attacker does not carry out the attack

Terrorist organizations are very susceptible to defections. Taking into account the complexity of logistics of organizing a suicide attack where the potential attacker can decide to defect at any stage, from planning through the execution of the attack. It is obvious that there is a large number of operatives who are involved to recruit and train a suicide attacker, record a video, to watch the attacker to be sure his or her resolve does not waver, secure explosives, identify a target, send the attacker on their way and then make a public announcement taking credit. (Berman and Laitin, 2005) Therefore, a terrorist organization will perform all matters necessary to avoid the defection of the suicide attack perpetrator, including blackmailing, threatening, and other measures.

5. EXISTING PROCEDURES WHEN DEALING WITH THE PREVENTION AND DETERRENCE OF SUICIDE ATTACKS

Suicide attacks have become terrorist organizations' main "strategic weapon." The interest of police and security organizations is to determine preventive and repressive measures which will prevent or deter the phenomenon of suicide attacks. Present procedures for dealing with prevention and deterrence of suicide attacks can be qualified as purely defensive measures. Those measures primarily include measures for preventing perpetrators from physically getting at the target, by imposing physical barriers to security screening, and strict border controls. Other existing measures are more complex, and they include decreasing the quantity or profile of potentially symbolic targets, early intelligence and surveillance as well as targeted killings of terrorists. In Israel they are also conducting the deterrent house demolitions, and building a security fence. Present procedures also provide basic training to police units and private security, and preparing the public to respond calmly in the face of an attack is another way to reduce the potential attractiveness of the attack in advance. The role of such anti-terrorism means is to deny the terrorist organization its most attractive targets. The cost/benefit calculations undertaken by the organization as well as the individuals must be manipulated to the point where achieving a spectacular symbolic strike with its attendant publicity becomes increasingly difficult and unattractive (Cronin, 2003).

6. POLICY OPTIONS

Understanding the rationale of a suicide bomber provides us with key advantages which will give us an opportunity for prevention or deterrence of a suicide bombing attack. It also provides us an insight into his motivation, and the tactics and capabilities of the organization that recruited him. When dealing with the occurrence of suicide attacks, security agencies combating terrorists have many tactical options, yet we are witnesses that these options often yield unintended and counterproductive consequences, therefore they have to be aware that it is of a paramount importance that they understand the rationality behind

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suicide attacks, because only then they would be able to develop an effective counterterrorism strategy. Once the rationale of suicide attackers is understood, security forces can increase their capability in predicting future targets, disrupting terrorist cells and thwarting attacks in advance. (Wiseman, 2012)

6.1. Prevention and deterrence of suicide attacks

As Hofman (2003) claims, the prevention is of paramount importance when dealing with the problem of suicide terrorism, police and other security agencies and institutions should act from the outside in, beginning far in time and distance from a potential attack and ending at the moment of an actual attack. Even though the importance of these steps is commonly acknowledged, they have been applied only in a limited number of states around the world. Continues with the statement that it is of crucial importance to develop good relations with the communities from which terrorists are recruited, and enhance communication campaigns to eliminate terrorist's support from these communities. It is important to know the terrorists' operative environment, their modus operandi and potential victims. In general, suicide attackers never act alone, they are "serviced" by a vast and complex logistics, therefore it is important not only to focus on the potential but on the organization which possesses the infrastructure essential to perform suicide attack operations.

Table 1. Preventive policy options:

Policy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Develop good relations with the communities from which terrorists are recruited, and enhance communication campaigns to eliminate terrorist's support from these communities.	Provides us with the possibility for prevention of the attacks starting long time before the terrorist attack happens. Building of trust takes away the logistics base of terrorist organizations and thus diminishes their operational capabilities.	It takes too much time with no guarantee of success.
Interdisciplinary and coordinated approach of all state security agencies, all information are shared as soon as possible, the planned counter-terrorist actions are made in coordination of all state and local security agencies.	It can solve the problem of terrorist attacks at the early stage and provide future guidelines for improvement of preventive measures.	Possibility of leaking of confidential information, requires intensive and long-lasting planning and complicated organization of large number of state and local institutions and agencies.

Table 1. (suffix)

Organize efficient intelligence gathering from places where terrorists conceal themselves and seek to establish and hide their infrastructure. Actively encourage and cultivate cooperation in a nonthreatening way. Encourage businesses from which terrorists can obtain bomb-making components to alert authorities if they notice large purchases of, for example, ammonium nitrate fertilizer; pipes, batteries, and wires; or chemicals commonly used to fabricate explosives.

A very good soft measure, through rapprochement with the local community and the implementation of the aforementioned measures, high quality and wideranging relationships can be achieved which can ultimately almost completely prevent the occurrence of suicide terrorism.

Information about customers who simply inquire about any of these materials can also be extremely useful to the police.

Very lengthy work, which is quite complicated and demanding, requires a wide range of intelligence measures and information gathering channels, which as such are highly susceptible to information leakage. It is also a very time-consuming and extremely intense process, both in time and logistically and ultimately does not guarantee safe success.

Force terrorists to pay more attention to their own organizational security than to planning and carrying out attacks.

The greatest benefit is in disrupting pre-attack operations.

Can be qualified as too repressive and undemocratic.

Form specialized counter terrorism units, specialized intelligence-gathering and reconnaissance activities of terrorist organizations, should be established within existing law-enforcement agencies. These units should be especially aware of places where organizations frequently recruit new members and the bombers themselves, such as community centers, social clubs, schools, and religious institutions.

If well-organized can prevent terrorism and crime in general.

Requires additional funds and specialized staff as well as a new infrastructure and logistics.

Organize a rigorous training for identifying a potential suicide bomber, confronting a suspect, and responding and securing the area around the attack site in the event of an explosion to all its personnel.

Gives security personnel a greater sense of awareness, familiarizes them with potential suicide attacks scenarios, provides them with the knowledge of best practices for minimizing the number of victims.

It will take lot of time to train all police and security personnel, it is costly and it does not guarantee a high level of success.

Training and establishment of Standard operative procedures on effective use of lethal weapons.

Can stop the suicide bomber at the last moment of the final stage of the attack, it sends a powerful message to both terrorist organization and civilian population.

Possibility of collateral victims, terrorist may activate the explosive without the possibility for civilians to hide, need for very well trained security personnel.

Source: Hofman, B. (2003), Kroenig, M., & Pavel, B., (2012)

A comprehensive strategy requires offensive operations to attack and disrupt terrorist networks, ehaviou to protect the homeland, and efforts to counter ideological support for terrorism. To devise an appropriate deterrence strategy against terrorists, it is necessary to desegregate a terrorist network into its component parts. Although many observers think of terrorists solely as the foot soldiers who conduct attacks, there are many other actors in a terrorist network: radical clerics preach incendiary sermons that incite violence, financiers fund terrorist operations, and leaders give orders to carry out attacks. Deterring these actions can be as important as directly preventing attacks themselves. A comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy aims to disrupt and deter activities in all of the key parts of a terrorist network. (Kroenig & Pavel, 2012: 11-20) Therefore, deterrence directly contributes to the prevention of terrorist attacks and, as we will see below, it is a necessary component of an effective counter-terrorism strategy for deterring terrorism.

Table 2. Deterrence strategies with pros and cons

Policy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct response strategies: Are those that aim to deter an adversary by threatening to retaliate against the adversary for taking hostile action. E.g., threaten to imprison radical clerics who incite violence.	- Effective form of deterrence It affects all those involved in suicide attacks organization: Terrorist leaders, financiers, supporters, radical clerics, and other members of terrorist networks value their lives and possessions Simple threats of imprisonment and death against these actors can deter terrorist activity.	 The so-called "hard core" of terrorist networks, including suicide bombers, may not be deterred by threats of direct retaliation. In order to be successful, a direct-response deterrent threat must be made conditional on an adversary ehaviour.
Indirect response strategies: Are those that deter by threatening to retaliate, not against terrorists themselves, but against something else that terrorists hold dear such as their families, assets, and communities.	 It forces would-be suicide bombers to trade off the benefits of personal glory and martyrdom against the cost of homelessness for their immediate families. There is evidence to suggest that it deterred many suicide bombings. 	- Has been proven impracticable because of their severity. State could impose taxes or travel restrictions on terrorists' families, for example Legal restrictions.
Tactical and strategic denial strategies: Are those that, simply put the threat of failure at the tactical level. Strategic denial policies deter terrorism by threatening to deny terrorists strategic benefits, even in the face of successful terrorist attacks.	- If terrorists believe that an attack is likely to fail, they will be less motivated to waste time and resources by attempting to carry it out. - Tactical denial targets the success of the attack itself. - It breaks the perceived link between successful terrorist operations and the goals they intended to serve. - It makes terrorists believe that even a string of highly successful attacks will not help them achieve those broader political goals.	- The Tactical and the Strategi denial are long processes without the proof that they will bear positive results Requires a very complex multidisciplinary approach Does not stop the terrorist attacks in a short time and may cause public's impatience uncertain and costly.

Source: (Kroenig, M., and Pavel, B., 2012:11-20)

ZBORNIK RADOVA

7. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

All those who are in position of policy making or are involved in operational duties in combating the phenomenon of suicide terrorism, must be aware that without an efficient operative strategy on coping with this problem, no security agency or government would be able to secure the safety of its people. All law enforcement entities have to come to a mutual understanding and a conclusion which will lead to the drafting of tactical procedures and policy for the prevention and deterrence of suicide attack. It is clear that fighting suicide terrorism is an extremely complex task. The counter-terrorism strategy cannot be based on "firefighting measures", we can't wait for the incident to occur and then to react, or to impose control or movement that directly restrict the rights and freedoms of all population (Cronin, 2003). As Hofman (2003) claims, the prevention and deterrence is of paramount importance when dealing with the problem of suicide terrorism, police and other security agencies and institutions should do moves from the outside in, starting long time before the terrorist attack happens and lasting as long as to the moment of the occurrence and the site of the attack, beginning far in time and distance from a potential attack and ending at the moment of an actual attack. Even though the importance of these steps is commonly acknowledged, they have been applied only in a limited number of states around the world. Hofman (2003) So, for that reason it is highly recommended to take following activities as soon as possible in order to prevent and deter possible suicide attacks:

- Try to develop, as much as possible, good relations with the local communities from which terrorists are recruited, Hofman (2003), and develop wide and intense communication campaigns to eliminate terrorist's support from these communities. In order to achieve this, it is important to organize an efficient and continuous intelligence gathering process from places where terrorists conceal themselves and seek to establish and hide their infrastructure. It is of vital importance to actively encourage and cultivate cooperation in a nonthreatening way (As stated in table 1). Kroenig, and Pavel, (2012)
- Organize an interdisciplinary and coordinated approach of all state security agencies, all information have to be shared as soon as possible among them, the planned counter-terrorist actions have to be planned and executed in coordination with all state and local security agencies (Table 1). Kroenig, and Pavel (2012)
- It is clear that it is extremely difficult to predict the occurrence of a terrorist attack and that despite all counter-terrorism measures, terrorist attacks happen, therefore in case of a suicide attack it is important to organize a rigorous training for identifying a potential suicide bomber, confronting a suspect, and responding and securing the area around the attack site in the event of an explosion. This training will give security personnel a greater sense of awareness and it will familiarize them with potential suicide attack scenarios and their reaction according to each scenario. It will also provide them with the knowledge of best practices for minimizing the number of victims. (Table 1) To prevent suicide attacks from occurring the best option are the tactical and strategic denial strategies which put the threat of failure at the tactical

level and in that way manipulate terrorist's cost-benefit calculation. Strategic denial policies deter terrorism by threatening to deny terrorists strategic benefits, even in the face of successful terrorist attacks. Indirect response strategies which are nowadays used in Israel are ethically and legally questionable due to its harshness and unselective nature. Even if it is sometimes difficult to retaliate against specific terrorists, it is ethically and legally unacceptable to harm other things that terrorist value such as their families, assets, and communities in hope that they will not commit the intended terror attack. (Table 2). Kroenig, and Pavel (2012)

8. CONCLUSION

This paper offers a framework for deterring terrorist networks and preventing possible suicide attacks. However, deterrence and prevention can only accomplish limited success and are only a part, not the basis, of counter-terrorism strategies. Regardless of its limited role, deterrence and prevention are crucial parts of an effective counter-terrorism approach. Kroenig and Pavel 2012) In order to have an efficient counter suicide attack strategy, deterrence and prevention have to be combined with other more proactive and repressive measures. Security agencies and law enforcement organizations have to come to a mutual understanding and a conclusion which will lead to the drafting of tactical procedures and a policy for the prevention, deterrence and operative response to a possible suicide bombing in any stages of an attack. It is clear that fighting suicide terrorism is an extremely complex task. The counter-terrorism strategy cannot be based on "firefighting measures", we can't wait for the incident to occur and then to react, or to impose control or movement that directly restrict the rights and freedoms of all population. (Cronin, 2003) It is of paramount importance to know the terrorists' operative environment, their modus operandi and potential victims. In general, suicide attackers never act alone, they are "serviced" by a vast and complex logistics, therefore it is important not only to focus on the potential but also on the organization which possesses the infrastructure essential to launch and sustain suicide attacks operations. For all of this, the interdisciplinary and coordinated approach of all state security agencies is necessary, all information have to be shared as soon as possible, the planned counter-terrorist actions have to be made in coordination of all state and local security agencies. Hofman, (2003).

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