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# TECHNOLOGIES USED BY TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC OPINION: THE EXPERIENCE OF RUSSIA, GERMANY AND SWEDEN

#### Abstract

This paper research new technologies of public relations and communication management with special comment on activities of terrorism in Russia, Germany and Sweden, Besides the right-extremist and leftist terrorist groups in Russia, Germany and Sweden there exist organizations with ethnonational/separatist or religious ideology. These groups carry out acts of terrorism against a wide category of the "targets", usually entailing an incomparably greater number of victims, rather than the practice of the "left" extremists. However, in both cases approximately 95% of the organizers for the acts of terrorism declared their responsibility in the mass-media. Terrorist propaganda in most cases has a negative character, does not offer any real alternative of political development, and pursues the purpose of attracting public attention. Almost always the group declares, what it opposes, without stressing what it supports. Today the countries of Western Europe are seldom exposed to terrorist attacks in comparison, for example, with the countries of the Middle East. However there are groups who still resort to communication methods of the RAF in Germany, consider themselves its successors and repeat its propaganda slogans. In the struggle against terrorist propagation governments do not only toughen political practice in the field of safety, but also use counter-propaganda. Mistakes which appear in the use of these methods lead to a drop in the prestige of the countries on the international scene or their governments in the public opinion inside of the country. It is necessary, not to forget about unity in the struggle against the general threat of international terrorism. Only in that way it is possible to overcome the danger of terrorist propagation. Deep democratization of all branches of policy and economy is a very important aspect. Creation of the image of a civil society, without construction of this society will never yield positive results.

**Key words:** terrorism, public opinion, communication management, public relations, Russia, Germany, Sweden.

Nowadays experts of PR and communication management describe many new technologies of influencing a mass audience. They are used both by state authorities and political parties and terrorists. The effectiveness of a terrorist act is measured by the influence it has on public opinion. The definition of terrorism as a theatre, given by Bryan Jenkins, has not lost its topicality.

Terrorist propaganda in most cases has a negative character, does not offer any real alternative of political development, and pursues the purpose of attracting public attention. Almost always the group declares, what it opposes, without stressing what it supports. Therefore it is possible to speak about "the armed propaganda" as leaders of Italian "Red brigades" used to call their terrorist actions. It is partly caused by the lack of an ideology, and partly – by the fact that the terrorist acts for the sake of the "customer" an act of terrorism. In I. E. Ivanov's opinion, the anti-Russian formations in the Chechen Republic in the 1990s did not manage to form a united front because of political and economic rivalry and the ideological contradictions of the various "sponsors" of the Chechen terrorists.

Among such "sponsors" the author mentions the petroleum exporting countries, whose aim is to block the construction of a pipeline through the Northern Caucasus, the main oil pipeline for transportation of the Caspian oil to Europe, which "would decrease the incomes of other exporters". He thinks, that "in these operations only in 1994 – 1995 Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates have invested approximately 2 billion dollars". Also Ivanov considers threats of terorist acts to be "an effective tool for the propagation of corruption among Russian state authorities<sup>52</sup>."

In the 1970–1980s the Ministry of State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, abbr. "Stasi") in East Germany kept in touch with various terrorist groups, especially with the "Red Army Faction" (RAF) in West Germany<sup>53</sup>. Ten terrorists from RAF at the end of 70s prepared to depart to the safe areas of the GDR. Under the control of "Stasi" many former terrorists lived a "respectable" life in the

<sup>52</sup> Иванов, И.Е. Предупреждение и пресечение террористических актов. *Психология терроризма*. (50-52). Издательство СПбГУ. (Ivanov I.E. Preduprezhdenie i presechenie terroristicheskikh aktov. Psikhologija terrorizma), 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Stasi, Encyclopædia Britannica, Chicago, 2007.

GDR with families and children. Terrorist Inge Wiett established contact with the GDR in 1979, after several preliminary meetings in East Berlin - in the XII department of the Ministry of State Security. In 1980 the members of RAF Monika Helbing, Christine Dümlein, Eckehard Freiherr von Seckendorff, Werner Lotze, Silke Maier-Witt. Ralf Friedrich. Siegfried Sternebeck and Susanne Albrecht left the GDR <sup>54</sup>. Henning Beer followed them in 1982, and Inge Wiett - in 1983. The control from "Stasi" over "retired terrorists" acquired a total character, and former members of the RAF could not be reconciled with it any more.

German researcher B. Peters believes that a motive for such a total control over their life is in the desire of the "Stasi" employees to collect and store up the information on life in West Germany and, at the same time, to prevent possible acts of terrorism from the RAF in territory of the GDR<sup>55</sup>. However there still exists an opportunity that the government of the GDR wanted to make the RAF a tool of conducting its policy on the territory of West Germany, considering, that "Stasi" trained the members of the RAF to be able to use various kinds of weapons and explosives.

In order to attract the public's attention, after each new act of terrorism the "Red Army Faction" published a communiqué in which it took responsibility for the act and explained its purposes. The example of RAF is typical for the majority of the groups explaining terror by the ideology of the left movement, the so-called leftist groups. Here the defining factor of influencing public opinion is the choice of a victim of the act of terrorism.

The protest against imperialism makes the extreme left organizations select as victims such people who embody imperialism in public opinion. In case of the RAF it is the federal public prosecutor Siegfried Buback, executive director of "Daimler-Benz" Hans-Martin Schleyer or the commander-in-chief of the armies of NATO on the territory of Germany, Alexander Haig. Police stations, military bases or large supermarkets also become objects of terrorist acts as they symbolize capitalist exploitation and social vulnerability of citizens. "The concept of the city guerilla", written in 1970 - 1971 by Ulrike Meinhof, is the first communiqué in which the group acts under the name of RAF. There is a bright logotype on the cover – the future famous initials of the RAF on a background of a MP5 machine pistol and a red star. This abbreviation has been chosen, possibly as a hint at the

<sup>54</sup> Müller, M., Kanonenberg, A. Die RAF-Stasi-Connection, Rowohlt, 1992.

<sup>55</sup> Peters, B. RAF: Terrorismus in Deutschland. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1991.

how "real" (British) RAF (Royal Air Force) and the Red Army treated the Nazis during World War II<sup>56</sup>. Some researchers, for example, such as B. Peters, attribute the creation of the emblem of RAF to Holger Meins, who subsequently starved to death and became one of the "heroes" of the organization<sup>57</sup>.

The famous communication method of the RAF was an artificial increase in the number of its members. It was reached owing to the fact that after the murder of each "Red Army man" the responsibility for the following act of terrorism was taken by the group named by the terrorist's name. Thus appeared the "Petra Schelm's Group", the groups of Holger Meins and Ulrike Meinhof. Now the ethno-religious terrorist groups often appearing in the media under different names are known to use this practice.

The second name of the RAF is the "Baader-Meinhof Group". In the opinion of some researchers, it would be more honest to name the organization by "Baader-Ensslin Group" because Gudrun Ensslin was in charge of terrorist practice in the RAF. Ulrike Meinhof is sometimes called the "PR-manager" of the RAF<sup>58</sup>. She wrote appeals and explanations for the acts of terrorism which then were judged by Andreas Baader in his consultations with G. Ensslin. The usage of the name "Meinhof" in the name of the group indicates that one of the main authors of the "Konkret" magazine and the ex-wife of its editor-in-chief Klaus-Reiner Röhl, U. Meinhof was already well-known to a wide audience, in comparison to the former student Ensslin. Her participation gave the RAF an "intellectual" aura. Besides. before her joining the group, U. Meinhof had shot a film "Resistance" (Bambule) about a young prisoner's life. The film was permanently withdrawn from the distribution in May 1970 when U. Meinhof helped A. Baader to escape from custody. Thus, here a method of the manipulation by the mass audience is used, which A. Tsuladze named "recommendation" or "certificate" in which the necessary appeal proceeds from the people who are renowned and respected by the target audience.<sup>59</sup> Here are other technologies of a manipulation used by RAF:

<sup>56</sup> Вэйг, Т. *Телемечтатели: Фракция Красной Армии: 1963 - 1993.* (37). ГОУПП «Гродненская типография». (Vaig T. Telemechtateli: Fractsija Krassnoj Armii: 1963 - 1993), 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Peters, B. Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF. (745) Argon Verlag GmbH, 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Peters, B. RAF: Terrorismus in Deutschland. (110-111) Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Цуладзе, А. *Большая манипулятивная игра*. «Алгоритм». (Tsuladze A. Bolshaja manipulativnaja igra), 2000.

## A manipulation method

# "Definition". Ideas, persons, objects are connected with positive or negative characteristics which are sure to be accepted by people without hesitation

### The example of usage of the method

The explanation given by RAF after the murder of H.-M. Schleyer: "After 43 days of captivity we have put to an end Hans-Martin Schleyer's spoiled and unfortunate life.... We shall not forget the blood spilled by chancellor Schmidt and imperialists that support him! The Struggle has just begun!" [9].

In the explanation given after acts of terrorism at two police stations in Bavaria in May, 1972, members of RAF wrote: "We oppose the rigid autocracy of police and the "short process" of fascists [our] systematic formation of guerrilla movement ... Struggle against the SS-practice of the police!" [10].

"Brilliant universality". Describing any events in which it is necessary to get the support of an audience by using "virtuous words" ("nation-wide support", "the overwhelming majority", "public opinion") are applied. U. Meinhof 's comment after the action of a group "Black September" in Munich: "the Imperialism of the international concerns is a unity which causes the protest at developing ... countries ... It is a system which in the political form of a lawful state manifests itself in the same way as fascism" [11].

"Giving labels or nicknames". This method is used for the discreditation of ideas, a person or a phenomenon by means of offensive metaphors and expressions. It allows forming a negative attitude to the opponents of the

The Appeal of the RAF management to the colleagues under arrest: "not a word to pigs in whatever disguise they appeared, especially in the guise of doctors. Not a word. And, certainly, we do not render them any

manipulator without the reasonable and logically justified arguments, by means of emotional influence on the audience help, will not move a finger to help them. Nothing but hostility and contempt... it is important. Not to give in to provocation. We will protect ourselves by our intransigence and relentlessness, by those human ways which are accessible to us" [12].

"City guerrilla and class struggle" reads: "People are on allowance in the army of fascists and die for exploiters and oppressors of people. Death here means nothing..." [13]

"Transfer". By means of this method the indisputable authority of any person is transferred to another person requiring popularization. For example, Saddam Hussein is represented by Iraqi propaganda as the successor of the ancient rulers of Mesopotamia. Attributing to RAF the functions of the real Red army: "Do they really believe, that we shall speak only about expansion of the class struggle and reorganization of proletariat and we shall not arm at the same time? BEGIN THE ARMED STRUGGLE! Form The RED ARMY!" [14]

Many terrorist groups used the method of "Transfer". For example, it is used in the names of the Uruguayan group "Tupamaros" (established in 1962) and West-German "Tupamaros of Western Berlin" who showed that they were the successors to the last Sapa Inca Tupac Amaru, who resisted the Spanish conquerors in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The circle of the people sympathizing with terrorists also had an essential influence on the communication opportunities of terrorist groups. Thus, Cl. Vasmund singled out the major functions of the circle of sympathizers:

- Function of publicity.
- Manipulation function.
- Mobilization function.
- · Function of rallying.
- Function of political socialization.
- Function of a recruiting of new terrorists.

Through this complex number of relationships and owing to the help of numerous lawyers the first generation of the RAF could become the centre of the struggle taking place outside the prisons. By beginning hunger-strikes, the leaders of the RAF tried to attach special significance to the statement: "It is we who define. when the doors of prisons open and the process ends".

The 1980s saw a decline of RAF ideology, which began after its ideologists left the stage. However the image of the group was for a long time imprinted in the memory of the Germans and is used today not only by terrorist groups, but also by artists. One of the vivid examples of the recent years is the performance "Ulrike Maria Stuart" staged at Hamburg theatre "Thalia". In the production of the play of Elfride Jelinek known in Russia for such novels as "The Pianist". "In front of the closed door", "Lust", etc., the rivalry of Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin is actually identified with rivalry of Mary Oueen of Scots and Oueen Elizabeth the 1st. Thus, the play reminds of the problem of emancipation, and the reflections on the motives of opposition often appeal to the images of the city guerrilla which are rooted in the mass consciousness, namely to its most popular representatives in Germany – the terrorists of the RAF.

Today the countries of Western Europe are seldom exposed to terrorist attacks in comparison, for example, with the countries of the Middle East. However there are groups who still resort to communication methods of the RAF in Germany, consider themselves its successors and repeat its propaganda slogans. One of the examples is a group "Anti-imperialistic cells" (Antiimperialistischen Zellen – AIZ) - the organization which was involved in the act of terrorism in the consulate of Peru in Düsseldorf. The explosions in the headquarters of CDU in Siegburg on 24 September 1994 are considered to be even more impudent acts of terrorism.

Originally this action was attributed to AIZ, but in March 1995 a communiqué of "Barbara Kistler's Group" was published which questioned the revolutionary principles of AIZ and took responsibility for the explosion. "Barbara Kistler's group" is named in honour of the Swiss girl who took part in the actions of the Kurdish guerrilla and was killed in battle with Turkish troops. Thus, the "advertisement" of the group appeared in the press. The principle of the choice of the "targets" was also followed, guaranteeing "an absolute success" as Georges Habash would predict<sup>60</sup>. One of the latest echoes of the leftists' actions is the action of 5 July 2003

<sup>60</sup> Исход войны решать спецслужбам! Аналитический центр HAMAKOH http://www.namakon.ru/articles.php?id=63&p=4

when "The group of revolutionary renewal" took responsibility for the arson at the Federal Security Policy Academy in Berlin.

In 1999 the authorities of Sweden have faced similar terrorist activity when the group of "Revolutionary socialists" made themselves known. Later (6 February 2000) the consulate of Austria in the Swedish city of Malmö became their target where an arson took place. A significant Swedish leftist terrorist group is the "Global Intifada", existing since 2002. In its propaganda the group declares, that it "struggles with capitalism, imperialism and the modern world order by direct action" This organization has selected the Polish and Danish military structures in Sweden as its targets in order to draw public attention to the war in Iraq in which both countries participated on the side of the USA.

The newspaper "Svenska Dagbladet" paid attention to the arson of the Polish consulate in the suburbs of Stockholm. The Russian press informed about the destruction of a car belonging to the Russian embassy in Sweden. After the explosion on 23 March 2005, the "Global Intifada" declared in the Swedish press that the explosion was "the indictment of the Russian authorities waging imperialistic war against the Chechen Republic" In Russia this case of terrorist propaganda became the reason for charging Sweden with the insufficient measures for terrorism prevention.

The right-extremist groups of Sweden also choose the victims, with the aim of attracting a maximum of attention. So, in November 1998 in Göteborg the right extremists (presumably) set fire to an immigrant disco. More than 70 people died. In 1999 two active workers of the left trade-union movement have been killed by militants. The attempt of the murder of the Minister of Justice of Sweden L. Freivalds was undertaken the same year. Today such groups as "The Union of the Scandinavian Blood and Honour", "White Aryan Resistance", "National Socialist Front", "The Party of Nordic people", "The Swedish Democrats" are considered to be the most active right-extremist groups of Sweden.

<sup>61</sup> Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), Oklahoma City. The Terrorism Knowledge Base http://www.tkb.org/Incident.jsp?incID=22286

<sup>62</sup> Арас, Дж. *Четвертая мировая война: Информационно-аналитический справочник по негосударственным военизированным системам.*(613). «АСТ». (Aras. G. Chetvjortaja mirovaja vojna: informatsionno-analiticheskij spravochnik po negosudarstvennym voenizirovannym sistemam), 2003.

A very intensive propaganda campaign through the Internet is typical of the right extremists. For example, in 2003 not less than 1300 sites of German right groupings, including 320 ones specializing in national propagation, national and racial intolerance, operated in the global network.

Besides the right-extremist and leftist terrorist groups in Russia, Germany and Sweden there exist organizations with ethnonational/separatist or religious ideology. These groups carry out acts of terrorism against a wide category of the "targets", usually entailing an incomparably greater number of victims, rather than the practice of the "left" extremists. However, in both cases approximately 95% of the organizers for the acts of terrorism declared their responsibility in the mass-media. In 2002 approximately 80% of the terrorist organizations had their own Internet-sites. Many groups have their own TV- and radio channels. Very often the servers of these sites are located in European countries.

On 15 October 2005 there was a short-term conflict in the Russian-Swedish relationships because of terrorism. The official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia Michael Kamynin declared the "impossibility of granting by Sweden the opportunities for the Internet-site of separatists of the Chechen Republic, "Caucasus-center", to broadcast from its territory". One day before "Caucasus-center" had informed the audience about the successful bombardment by militants of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Security Service, the 2nd and the 3rd departments of Internal Affairs in Nalchik, the capital of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic [22].

The leftist organizations in Russia, such as "Red Guerrillas", are far from being so notable as the actions of the separatists (demolishing houses in Moscow, Volgodonsk and Buinaksk, taking hostages at the musical "Northeast" in autumn 2002). But in all the three countries the growth of the influence of terrorism in public opinion is marked. The number of the people convinced, that the number of terrorist attacks will not decrease, and that the actions of the authorities will be directed to the destruction of terrorists at any cost, grows in Russia. "Washington ProFile" Center stated that among citizens of the USA from January till October 2002 the conviction in the victory by the terrorists over the forces of the western countries had increased from 7 to 21%. Fear of terror exists in Europe too.

It has increased in Germany, in particular, since 16 November 2003 when the Bundestag has approved the decision of G. Shröder about the participation of Germany in the land operation in Afghanistan. Among the last events, which contributed to the terrorist war, it is necessary to mention the sensational caricatures of Prophet Mohammed in the western press. All this has led to toughening of the control over a public life by the criminal police (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA).

In Sweden, according to the Russian mass-media, the threat of Islamic fundamentalism has led even to the suggestion that school teachers and social workers should inform the local branches of SÄPO (security service) about the moods of schoolboy-moslems, "intercepting the potential terrorists on the school bench"<sup>63</sup>. It provoked protest actions among teachers. Three acts of terrorism till now are considered as the most serious crisis situations for the image of SÄPO in Sweden. First of them –is the seizure by three Croatian terrorists of a plane with the requirement to release seven Croatians in prison (on 15 September 1972). The second is the capture of the embassy of Germany in Stockholm by the West-German terrorists on 24 April 1975 (Holger Meins Group, a branch of the RAF), and, the last one is the murder of Ulof Palme on 28 February 1986<sup>64</sup>.

In Russia where in 2001 President Putin has declared struggle against terrorism as a priority direction of the state policy. This line remains one of the main aspects of formation of the image of the country on the international scene, and communication mistakes lead in some cases to the fall of the President's rating. Russia struggles for the status as an active fighter against terrorism more actively every year. In 2004 in Moscow under the direction of the Collective Security Treaty Organization agreement there took place a constituent plenum of the International anti-terrorist media-forum "Mass-media against terrorism and drug traffic". "In 2006 the Russian Federation received the presidency in the Group of Counter-Terrorist Actions (GCA). The Main task of GCA, which was created under aegis of G8, is the coordination of the assistance rendered by its members on a bilateral basis to third countries in an attempt at increasing their anti-terrorist potential.

The Work of the Russia during its presidency in the "Group of Eight" in 2006 in connection with GCA was to focus on the main priorities of the international anti-terrorist interaction. There is an ideological counteraction to terrorism which provides in the first place the growth of efforts on prevention of the population's radicalization, necessity of carrying out of wide anti-terrorist propaganda, the

<sup>63</sup> The informational portal http://www.utro.ru

<sup>64</sup> Hansén, D. Crisis and Perspectives on Policy Change: Swedish Counter-terrorism Policymaking, Swedish National Defence College, Crismart. Publication, 2007.

involvement of the mass-media and religious structures into the condemnation of terrorism, other ideas, concerning mobilization of potential on reaction to terrorism

Another independent direction in the work of GCA is assistance in struggle against financing terrorism. There are solid databases at Federal Service on Financial Monitoring in Russia on this problem, first of all, in the works of the Euroasian group on counteraction of criminal incomes.

In the struggle against terrorist propagation governments do not only toughen political practice in the field of safety, but also use counter-propaganda. Mistakes which appear in the use of these methods lead to a drop in the prestige of the countries on the international scene or their governments in the public opinion inside of the country.

It is necessary, not to forget about unity in the struggle against the general threat of international terrorism. Only in that way it is possible to overcome the danger of terrorist propagation. Deep democratization of all branches of policy and economy is a very important aspect. Creation of the image of a civil society, without construction of this society will never yield positive results.

Anti-terrorist propaganda should not remain the method of manipulation in the hands of special services and governments. However the communicational threat of terrorism now, in my opinion, is not less strong than the threat of the terrorist practice itself. Therefore the importance of studying the communication aspects of terrorism is growing in the modern world.

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# TEHNOLOGIJE KOJE KORISTE TERORISTIČKE ORGANIZACIJE KAKO BI UTICALE NA JAVNO MNJENJE: ISKUSTVO RUSIJE, NEMAČKE I ŠVEDSKE

#### **Apstrakt**

Ovaj rad istražuje nove tehnologije odnosa sa javnošću i komunikacijskog menadžmenta sa posebnim osvrtom na aktivnosti terorizma u Rusiji, Njemačkoj i Švedskoj. Pored desno-ekstremističkih i levičarskih terorističkih grupa u Rusiji, Njemačkoj i Švedskoj postoje i organizacije sa etnonacional/separatističkom ili verskom ideologijom. Ove grupe izvode terorističke napade protiv široke kategorije "meta", obično povlačeći za sobom neuporedivo veći broj žrtava u odnosu na praksu "levih" ekstremista. Međutim, u oba slučaja oko 95% organizatora terorističkih napada priznali su svoju odgovornost u masovnim medijima. Teroristička propaganda u većini slučajeva ima negativan karakter, ne nudi nikakvu alternativu za politički razvoj, i služi svrsi privlačenja pažnje javnosti. Gotovo uvek grupa izjavljuje ono čemu se protivi, bez isticanja onoga što podržava. Danas su zemlje zapadne Evrope retko izložene terorističkim napadima u poređenju sa, na primer, zemljama Srednjeg Istoka. Međutim, ima grupa koje još uvijek pribegavaju komunikacijskim metodama RAF u Njemačkoj, smatrajući se njihovim naslednicima i ponavljajući njihove propagandne slogane. U borbi protiv širenja terorizma, vlasti treba ne samo da očvrsnu političku praksu na polju bezbednosti, već i da koriste kontra-propagandu. Pogreške koje se javljuju u korišćenju tih metoda dovode do pada ugleda zemalja na međunarodnoj sceni ili njihovih vlada u javnom mnjenju unutar zemlje. Neophodno je da se ne zaboravi na jedinstvo u borbi protiv opšte pretnje međunarodnog terorizma. Samo na taj način moguće je prevazići opasnost od širenja terorizma. Dubinska demkratizacija svih grana politike i ekonomije je veoma važan aspekt. Stvaranje imidža civilnog društva, bez izgradnje ovog društva, nikada neće dati pozitivne rezultate.

Ključne reči: terorizam, javno mnjenje, komunikacijski menadžment, odnos sa javnošću, Rusija, Njemačka, Švedska.