



THE POLISH  
QUARTERLY OF  
INTERNATIONAL

# AFFAIRS

volume 22

no. 1/2013

## Special issue on occasion of NATO Advanced Research Workshop “The Perseverance of Terrorism: Focus on Leaders”

Richard English, Ryszard Machnikowski, Iztok Prezelj,  
Dario Cristiani, Philipp Münch, Asta Maskaliunaite,  
Ahmad El-Buckley, Teun Van Dongen

## European External Action Service Report

Ryszarda Formuszewicz, Dorota Liszczyk





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PISM

POLSKI INSTYTUT SPRAW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH  
THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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**Publisher:** Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych (The Polish Institute of International Affairs)

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ISSN 1230-4999

The views expressed in *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* are solely those of the authors. *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* is regularly presented in the catalogue of International Current Awareness Services, in Ulrich's International Periodical Directory, and in International Political Science Abstracts/Documentation Politique Internationale. Selected articles are included in the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences.

# CONTENTS

## ARTICLES

<b>A Note from the Editors</b> .....	7
--------------------------------------	---

### **Richard English**

Introduction. ....	8
--------------------	---

### **Ann-Sophie Hemmingsen**

Making a Case for Going to Court: Militant Islamism in Denmark . . . . .	10
<i>This article argues that there is potential in adopting a strategy of targeting such individuals for legal prosecution but not necessarily under terrorism legislation. It argues that an approach relying on pretextual prosecutions could be effective and possibly have fewer counterproductive side effects than prosecutions under terrorism legislation. This is done by first drawing a picture of the militant Islamist environment in Denmark and secondly suggesting a path for implementing such a strategy, introducing the challenges and potential pitfalls associated with it.</i>	

### **Samuel Arbe**

Terrorism: A Need for Complex Response . . . . .	21
<i>The threat of transnational terrorism became more evident than any kind of domestic threats. Western leaders have clearly understood the asymmetric nature of terrorism and the urgency to react. Moreover, the fight against terrorism has gained an international hallmark, and the post-Cold War non-interventionism of the 1990s has ceased to exist. This text will attempt to shed light on how the international terrorist should be tackled and where the international effort, resources and emphasis on counter-terrorism should be put.</i>	

### **Wojciech Grabowski**

Targeting Terrorist Leaders: Limits and Opportunities . . . . .	28
<i>Leadership decapitation is a part of the counter-terrorism strategy which can be successful if undertaken under certain conditions. On the one side decapitation tactic required very specific amount of resources instead invest in others counter-terrorism measures. But on the other side it can bring “boomerang effect” while the aim of reduce capabilities of the terrorist group can be achieve also by different methods, like pitting one group faction against other. Despite arguments for and against targeted killing, it should be taken as one of a broader set of counter-terrorist measures and should include local authorities. Despite all the most effective strategy combating terrorism seems to be prevent it on different stages before it turn into real threat for the state security.</i>	

## **Iva Kornfein**

- Combating Terrorism: European and Croatian Perspective . . . . . 34  
*The effective combating of contemporary terrorism requires a great deal of international cooperation and the employment of various methods and strategies. The European Union is pushing forward for a comprehensive, harmonised joint European policy on counter-terrorist measures. Croatia plays and will continue to play a small, yet important role, because it is the only NATO member that has had recent experience with a defensive war. Also, it is a gateway country that can serve as a bridge between the West and the East and thus help battle terrorism by providing expertise and understanding of the Islamic culture with which it has close contact through Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

## **Karolina Libront**

- Targeting Leaders: No Easy Short-cuts. . . . . 41  
*There is no consent in the literature as to whether targeting leaders is effective, although all researchers agree that in no way it is a magic bullet that would solve the problem of terrorism. It could be effective as an operational component within a broader counter-terrorism strategy rather than as a single instrument. It is also indispensable to bear in mind the normative and moral contexts. Using a combination of measures and strengthening the law enforcement elements of counter-strategies are therefore recommended.*

## **Ryszard Machnikowski**

- Terrorist Leadership—to Kill or Not to Kill . . . . . 49  
*It seems that we are never in a position to be absolutely sure that a terrorist entity truly deserves to be ignored without paying a high price if our assessment ultimately proves to be wrong. By ignoring the problem we are providing prospective terrorists with time to grow and develop deadlier skills—this is probably the worst option and is not worth trying. We should study each event of political extremism patiently and stubbornly and try to prevent the moment it crosses the line between legitimate political activism, however unpleasant it may seem, to illegitimate violence.*

## **Iztok Prezelj**

- Smart Counter-terrorism: Incorporating the N-order Effects  
and Adopting a Human Security Perspective . . . . . 52  
*This paper argues that counter-terrorism communities need to incorporate the second and third order effects of their pre-emptive actions into their planned actions, and adopt a broader human security approach which will bring long-term sustainable security. Democratic states should be more careful with their policy of offensive counter-terrorism (especially targeted killings) in order to prevent further boomerang effects, resurrection of the eliminated terrorist nodes, and damage to democratic values.*

## **Péter Marton**

- Investigating the Calculated Elimination of Removable Enemies:  
The Puzzle of Terrorism Decapitation Research. . . . . 63  
*To claim that calculated actors (i.e., the counter-terrorist decision-makers), interested as they are in securing the indirect goal of political stability, will kill*

*(or capture) terrorist leaders when they are in a position to do so, and with good results in terms of terrorist group mortality, may be a double tautology. This is presented as the puzzle of terrorism decapitation research: the paradox of doubts about the utility of something that may be seen as guaranteed to work.*

## **Dario Cristiani**

Focus on Leaders? Insights from the Algerian Experience . . . . . 73

*The Algerian experience shows that fighting terrorism and extremism requires a plurality of instruments rather than a simple focus on a single instrument, as this kind of threat is intrinsically multifaceted and multidimensional. In this wider framework, focusing on leaders is only one aspect among many others, although symbolically it may bear rather strong importance in the process of defeating the enemy.*

## **Philipp Münch**

Engaging Leaders of Non-state Armed Groups:

Evidence from Northeastern Afghanistan . . . . . 81

*Leaders still play a decisive role in non-state armed groups. They are, however, not omnipotent as patron-client systems consist of reciprocal relations. Leaders have to constantly ensure the loyalty of their followers by distributing resources and acting in their favour, as frequent splits of non-state armed groups and infighting over command and control shows. Finally, the formation and existence of non-state armed groups is unthinkable without the interests of groups who are excluded from government power and wider social grievances. Therefore, leaders of non-state armed groups should be engaged to influence the behaviour of their followers, but the social context should not be disregarded.*

## **Asta Maskaliūnaitė**

Leaders Make History, but They Do Not Make It as They Please . . . . . 91

*The leaders of terrorist organisations should not be completely ignored, but engaging them has to be part of a larger comprehensive strategy. The essence of this strategy should focus on the reduction of the organisations' capabilities to inflict damage, limit the appeal of violent means in its constituency and the denial of recruitment to it. The latter can well be the consequence of the former two, though that is not always the case.*

## **Ahmad El-Buckley**

Preserving the Pied Piper:

The Importance of Leadership in Deradicalisation . . . . . 98

*This article argues that while proponents of decapitation and targeted killings of terrorist leaders advance logically sound arguments, empirical studies have often shown that these arguments do not take hold in reality. The article then draws on the Egyptian experience with the deradicalisation of Islamist militant groups to claim that capturing rather than eliminating certain types of leaders can have a substantial impact on efforts to reform weakly committed foot-soldiers of terrorist organisations and non-violent sympathisers, which should be at the heart of all long-term counter-terrorism strategies.*

## **Teun Van Dongen**

- Terrorist Leadership Elimination: When to Do It? . . . . . 106**  
*It is true that there have been attempts to find explanations for the effectiveness of leadership eliminations, but those have been largely focused on easily observable and only indirectly relevant factors such as ideology and the age of terrorist groups. Organisational structure has been considered as well, but with little success. In a modest attempt to make up for this gap, the remainder of this article outlines two fairly intuitive policy recommendations regarding terrorist leadership elimination. They are intended to help policy makers decide when—and when not—to try this strategy.*

## **Eman Ragab**

- Targeting Leaders as a Strategy for Countering Terrorism:  
The Egyptian Case . . . . . 116**  
*Egypt's experience in countering terrorism, examined in this article, reveals that countering terrorism requires complex strategies, relying not only on targeting leaders. Besides, the efforts of America during the Bush administration, in cooperation with several countries in the Middle East, did not lead to the end of terrorism, but instead new patterns of terrorism were created and overlapped with organised crime, making it more complex.*

## **Raimonds Rublovskis**

- The Approaches of State Security and Defence Institutions to Terrorist  
Network Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Security Environment . . . . . 126**  
*This paper will analyse possible options for a state to engage the leadership of terrorist, insurgent and organised crime networks, and possible legal, military and political consequences of such engagement. However, the main argument of this paper is that every single case of engagement of such leadership is unique and requires highly individually tailored approaches by state institutions.*

## **Roxana Apalaghie**

- Gender-based Efforts to Counter Female Suicide Terrorism . . . . . 135**  
*The purpose of this analysis is to provide an exploratory view of terrorist attacks by females in order to identify repeatability in which countries, the types of weapons used and the nature of the target and number of casualties, and whether a group or individual was responsible.*

## **Ryszarda Formuszewicz, Dorota Liszczyk**

- The Staffing Policy of the European External Action  
Service—Stocktaking Ahead of the 2013 Review . . . . . 139**  
*The aim of this article is to give an overview of the European External Action Service (EEAS) staffing policy to date as a result of the interaction between its regulations, recruitment practices, the service's hybrid structure and its expectations towards its performance/deliverables.*



## A Note from the Editors

This Special Issue of The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs includes contributions from future speakers and participants of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop (ARW) “The Perseverance of Terrorism: Focus on Leaders.” The workshop will be held 24–26 April 2013 in Belgrade, Serbia. PISM analyst Kacper Rękawek serves as co-director of the ARW along with Marko Milošević of the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP).

The objectives of the ARW are as follows: 1. to assess the longevity and perseverance of the terrorist threat to both NATO members and NATO partner countries; 2. to establish the extent to which a terrorist threat is dependent on the leadership of a terrorist group, organisation or network; 3. to disseminate knowledge and exchange information about the recent state of scholarship and expertise related to countering terrorism; 4. to establish long-lasting links and networks amongst workshop participants; 5. to strengthen the links between academia and the think tank community; 6. to provide participants with a platform of contact with the world’s most established terrorism experts; 7. to critically assess the existing knowledge related to countering terrorism and to identify gaps; 8. to identify challenges to policy-oriented research on leadership of terrorist groups, organisations and networks in the post-bin Laden age; 9. to offer a structured set of solutions to counter-terrorism practitioners on how to approach the issue of leadership in terrorist groups, organisations and networks, and how to address this issue in the most efficient manner; 10. to produce guidelines and ideas for future research avenues in the field of terrorism studies. More information on the ARW, including the information sheet and speaker’s bios, is available at: [www.pism.pl/Research/Projects/PISM-is-administering-a-NATO-grant-from-the-science-for-peace-and-security-programme-sps](http://www.pism.pl/Research/Projects/PISM-is-administering-a-NATO-grant-from-the-science-for-peace-and-security-programme-sps).



*This workshop  
is supported by:*

**The NATO Science for Peace  
and Security Programme**

## Introduction

It is arguable that terrorism research has been transformed even more than terrorism itself during the years since the atrocity of 9/11. This excellent collection of papers reflects on some of the more exciting trends that have developed, interrogates some of the more angular problems that persist, and draws deeply on case-study expertise in order to move numerous debates on terrorism and counter-terrorism very helpfully forward.

The subjects covered here are not all ones that will appeal to the squeamish. Does “decapitation” of terrorist leaderships work? If so, why, and under what circumstances, and at what cost? Is the integration of terrorists into state networks and structures justified and effective as a counter-terrorist tactic? How far should we concentrate on terrorist leaders anyway? The case studies range from Egypt to Algeria to Spain to France to Denmark. Such impressive balance helps avoid some of the problems that have hindered terrorism research in recent years, such as an over-emphasis on Al Qaeda (there are probably now more people studying Al Qaeda than are actually in it), or the lack of scrutiny of those policies which have in practice worked rather well against non-state terrorist groups.

Historically, terrorism has changed world politics much more powerfully through the provocation of large-scale state reactions than it has through its own (admittedly pernicious and blood-spattered) directly violent effects. Both the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries began with incidents of terrorist violence, state reactions to which transformed politics and international relations. This was clearly far more deleterious in the case of the First World War than that of the War on Terror, but the broad and unavoidable point remains: it is state responses to terrorist atrocities that provide the most important variable in this antiphonal relationship as it changes world history in various ways.

And the connection between terrorists and counter-terrorists is indeed relational, mutually shaping, and even intimate. All scholars of terrorism who have worked close-up to their subjects and who have also dealt with counter-terrorist actors recognise the mutual yet hostile understanding that can develop between terrorists and counter-terrorists during periods of cat-and-mouse conflict. The