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REIS, Marcus Vinícius. (2017),
*Terrorismo: conhecimento e
combate*. Niterói: Ímpetus. 203 p.
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Edson Atallah Monreal¹, Gills Vilar-Lopes² |

Resumo

O livro “Terrorismo: conhecimento e combate”, lançado em 2017, faz parte da Série Editorial “Inteligência, Segurança e Direito” e apresenta uma abordagem atual e detalhada sobre esse fenômeno, desde seus primeiros registros históricos até 2016. Ao longo de sete capítulos, os autores apresentam: um breve histórico do terror, levantam fontes do direito internacional e nacional e realizam uma análise sobre mecanismos de prevenção e resposta, além de trazer perspectivas atuais e futuras sobre o terrorismo, que é uma verdadeira “ameaça à paz e à segurança dos Estados”.

Palavras-chave: terrorismo; inteligência; combate.

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¹ Mestrando do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Aeroespaciais (PPGCA) da Universidade da Força Aérea (UNIFA). Professor do Programa de Pós-Graduação MBA em Gestão da Aviação Civil da Faculdade Anhembi Morumbi. E-mail: edson.monreal@yahoo.com. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4438-5921>

² Professor do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Aeroespaciais (PPGCA) da Universidade da Força Aérea (UNIFA). Doutor em Ciência Política pela Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE). E-mail: gills@gills.com.br. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3597-2152>

The book “Terrorism: knowledge and combat”, released in 2017, is part of the Editorial Series “Intelligence, Security and Law” and presents a current and detailed approach to this phenomenon, since its first historical records until 2016. Its authors are Joannisval Brito Gonçalves, PhD in International Relations, and Marcus Vinícius Reis, PhD in History, both of whom are career servants of the Brazil Federal Senate.

Over seven chapters, the authors present: a brief history of terror, survey sources of international and national law and carry out an analysis of prevention and response mechanisms, as well as bringing current and future perspectives on terrorism, which is a real “threat to the peace and security of States” (BRAZIL, 2016, p. 6).

The forewords written by David Spencer introduce the theme and describes it in a global dimension, adding relevant points to the book, such as the option of terrorism as a convenient alternative to conventional war due to the advantageous cost-benefit ratio, as well as the association of terrorist groups to criminal organizations, as a way of expanding the collection to finance terrorist acts.

In the first chapter, they define and discuss the concept of terrorism. Despite the lack of consensus on the term, some of the main concepts adopted by international organizations and states are mentioned here, as well as essential elements that appear in almost all the definitions covered in the book, such as: (i) political objectives; (ii) violent unlawful acts or threats; (iii) actions taken with the aim at producing effects that go beyond those on the victims, with general repercussions; and (iv) actions conducted by non-state organizations or subnational groups. The authors point out that the terrorist groups behavior is rational, despite the irrationality of their acts, approaching the intensity of a war. By justifying this thought, they point out that the War on Terror has been considered acceptable by the international community segments.

The importance and relevance of this issue is confirmed by the existence of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, established after the September 11 attacks. From the perspective of international relations, state responsibility for preventing terrorism is observed:

The United States’ response [to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks] meant a return to sovereignty and territoriality expressed in the purest Classical Realism. The answer, in the first place, was the organization of the country with military action and, in that sense, the United States remains more sovereign than ever. Then, the attack on Afghanistan and the rhetoric of an evil axis of countries continue to provide a territorial and state response to the issue of terrorism. (SARFATI, 2005, p. 330, translation free).

The work emphasizes that the United States, by declaring war on terror, has created a faceless, abstract adversary that, in practical terms, could never be defeated as a conventional enemy.

The authors also mention the relationship between the insurgency and terror, in which groups use these elements as a strategy for seizing power and forming a new government. At the end of the chapter, the speech on the right to disobey the State, used by terrorist organizations, has been present. This discourse echoes in countries with little or no political freedom, such as dictatorships and non-legitimate governments, but it is not applicable in solid democracies, where institutional dialogue exists.

The second chapter takes a concise history of terrorism, picking up from the earliest records in history, of an extremist group of Jews fighting for Palestine occupation in the Christian Era’s early years, passing through France in 1789, when Robespierre established the Reign of Terror, with beheadings and intolerance in the name of the French Revolution, reaching the current trends of terrorist groups in 2016.

The American scientist David Rapoport, international reference in the area, describes four waves about this issue: Anarchy (1890 to 1920), Anticolonialism (1920 to 1960), New Left (1960 to 1980) and Religious (1979 to the present). Nationalism, doctrinal foundations, the use of technology, and the revolution idea are pointed out as common elements to all those waves. The authors' richness of details in describing the Muslim Brotherhood stands out, from its emergence in 1928 to its current presence in more than 70 countries. This movement was the birthplace of Al-Qaeda, the largest terrorist group today, which became worldwide famous in 2001, claiming more than 3,000 lives and taking local and regional terrorism to the global level (MORELL; HARLOW, 2016, pp. 315-341). Despite the media projection achieved with the attacks, in the last 15 years, only 0.5% deaths from terrorism occurred in Western countries, 70% of which were committed by "lone wolves". The description of a possible Fifth Terrorist Wave ends the chapter, which would be composed by the terrorist association and criminal organizations, with the massive use of communication technologies and social media for the recruitment, training, acts dissemination and cyber-attacks.

The next chapter deals with Terrorism and Law, presenting legal aspects in different countries, as well as the international instruments for prevention and response. The main multilateral instruments signed by Brazil on terrorism and the events that led to their elaboration are presented here, emphasizing that they do not have clear definition. The authors also carried out documentary research on terrorism within the scope of the UN and comparative legislation, highlighting the common elements in the international definitions of terrorist acts, namely: effect, content, purpose, modus operandi and motivation. The drafting of the Brazilian anti-terror law is described in detail, from its legal basis to its vetoes.

The Brazil's Federal Constitution's art. 4th repudiates terrorism (BRAZIL, 1988) and, once there are penalties provided for crimes related to these acts, the current understanding until then was in the sense of no need for specific penal norm, as the legislation would already punish them with legal instruments existing. In compliance with international treaties signed by Brazil and due to the growing concern of the police and judicial authorities with the preparations for the Great Events that took place in Brazil between 2012 and 2016, the perception on this matter has changed. According to the authors, Law 13.260/2016, which defined the crime of terrorism, innovated by incorporating Cyber Terrorism and the punishment of preparatory acts for terrorism, but it failed by excluding the political motivation from the final text, which is the essence of the act and present in international legislation. Regarding Cyber Terrorism, the reflection of the Brazil's National Intelligence Strategy (ENINT) is highlighted, citing that: "[...] other risks arise with technological evolution: the automation and interconnectivity of critical infrastructure systems, for example, make cyber sabotage possible" (BRAZIL, 2017, p. 14, free translation).

Chapter 4 performs a macro-analysis of terrorism and addresses the circumstances that lead a terrorist organization to commit its acts, causes, motivations, objectives, strategies and economic context. The authors carry out a historical analysis, citing that urbanization has caused an environment conducive to the recruitment and attacks execution, pointing out that the popularization of Internet access will increasingly enable the occurrence of Cyber Terrorism. The chapter concludes that terrorism, seen as a rational act, involves equating costs and benefits, so that it can also be combated by the State through the control of financial activities. In Brazil, the Financial Activities Control Council (Coaf), an agency created under the Ministry of Economy acts eminently in preventing and combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

The next chapter complements the previous one, by conducting a microanalysis of terrorism and discussing the functioning of a terrorist organization, its structure, targeting, performance, instruments and tactics. In the classic models of structuring the groups – hierarchical (centralized) and networked (decentralized) –, they identify a common minimum structure: the terrorist cell, which brings essential information about the global structure of the group. The authors argue that there is a perverse relationship between terrorists and the media, which, in their eagerness to provoke public opinion with impacting images and news, may end up publicizing and promoting these organizations, collaborating with their objectives. Criteria for target selection and terrorist tactics - explosions, murders, kidnappings and hostage-taking in aircraft, ships and trains – were scrutinized, highlighting that the use of explosives accounts for almost 80% of all attacks, as they are popular, low cost and high harmful potential. In opposition to the rationalism of the planning of the attack, the authors highlight the irrationality of the suicide bomber and point out that it is an efficient form of terror, since the probability of imprisonment is practically zero and can kill 12 times more than other forms of terror, being only 3.5% attacks, but responsible for almost 30% deaths associated with terrorism. They also address the Cheney Doctrine (1% Doctrine), which mentions that, even though the possibility of an attack is remote, governments must work as if it were really going to happen.

The sixth chapter deals with the response mechanisms of States and society, which can be carried out by the Armed Forces (war context), public security (criminal problem) or a combination of these (hybrid). The book focuses on the criminal justice model, more common in solid democracies, and points out that terrorism explores some dilemmas of the democratic regime in which there is a complex balance between individual freedoms and the imposition of restrictions on rights, which touches the moral and making it difficult for the security forces to work. The authors point out that, without a prevention plan, the organization becomes vulnerable and that, without a response plan, it will be disoriented in the event of an attack. Intelligence activity, therefore, permeates both plans, being essential to the decision-making process.

The final chapter presents the perspectives of the terrorist phenomenon, being a stimulus to the debate than a conclusion on the theme. There is no single answer to terrorism, due to its rapid adaptability to social, technological, legal and political configurations. An overview of Global Jihad, “superterrorism”, lone wolves, sector outsourcing and its association with organized crime was also made. In the end, they conclude that terrorism will have a fertile field as long as intolerance, prejudice and ignorance persist, and it is essential that the State disseminates the culture of security and intelligence, so that society is not surprised.

Along the book, the authors go through in detail the evolution of terrorism, from its origin to future perspectives. Renowned thinkers are mentioned, such as Degaut and Rapoport, which demonstrates the academic maturity of the work. We understand that the book fulfills its function, which is: to be a manual for Security, Defense and Intelligence professionals and students in favor of preventing and responding to terrorist attacks.

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