

TURSAM Center for Strategic Studies
www.tursam.org; tursam@tursam.org
Dr. Ahmad Shahidov
www.shahidov.com;
ahmad@shahidov.com

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM: EXPERIENCE OF AZERBAIJAN

Organized criminal activity and terrorism in particular have already outgrown national borders and threaten the world community, becoming the global problem that affects the interests of all countries. The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan fully supports the international efforts in combating this evil and unambiguously condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations irrespective of political, economic, religious and other motives.

Terrorism threatens the world, which is based on principles of civilized, peaceful, equitable and democratic co-existence. Social, political and psychological impact of terrorism is enormously destabilizing, it undermines both economic progress and development. It increasingly acquires the character of global threat and so the necessity to join efforts within the international community in combating terrorism grows. Azerbaijan believes that the long-term goals of struggle against international terrorism should target not only separate terrorist organizations, groups and/or individuals, but also the causes and sources of terrorism in general.

Nowadays international terrorism should be regarded not only as the threat to the individual states, but a challenge to all humanity. That has predetermined a number of radically new features of terrorism at the globalization stage.

First, Terrorism has changed its purposive orientation. Today terrorist organizations more frequently aim their efforts not just to the destabilization of situation or resolution of some short-term tasks, but

also to the achievement of large-scale goals like – seizure and redistribution of power, annexation of independent states' territories with expulsion of local residents. Azerbaijan, who due to the Armenian aggression lost 20% of territory and acquired approximately a million of refugees and internally displaced persons, can serve as an example of such practice. Tens of terror acts, committed in the rear areas of the country hundreds kilometers away from the front line and taken 2000 civilian lives, have been carried out for the achievement of concrete political aim – alienation of Azerbaijan territory by means of aggressive separatism. One way or another these threats also exist in other newly independent countries – Georgia, Turkey, Russia, Moldova etc. The distinguishing feature of the terrorism in those countries is that it serves either to direct aggression of states or to aggressive separatism carried out under the ethnic cover. One can ascertain that today terrorism is tightly bound with separatism. For instance, Basque terrorists, extremist wing of Irish Republican Army, “Tigers of Liberation of Tamil Lama” and others.

Second, Practice demonstrates that terrorist and extremist organizations of different manifestations cooperate each other well. Political, religious extremism, aggressive separatism, anti-globalism, left and rightwing radicalism etc. – they all are links of the same terrorist chain completing each other at different sites of terror activity. Coping with one link or one component would not constitute valid resolution of problem of terrorism in whole. For instance, that will not be complete and final resolution of the problem if world community would direct its efforts only to the fighting international terrorism carried out under the religious cover. This struggle should not be divided into the “primary” and “secondary” directions, terrorism must be coped along all of the front line.

Third, Terrorist organizations cooperate with groups from other spheres of organized crime. Separatist regimes in the newly independent states and Nagorno Karabakh as well use the territories under their control for the purposes of illicit drugs, arms and people trafficking, money laundries and other illegal activity and direct the

gained assets for the financing of terrorism. The US Department of State's report for 2001 clearly reflects the facts of use of the occupied Azerbaijan territories for the purposes of drugs transportation from Asia to Europe through Russia.

Fourth, Nowadays due to the globalization, process and distribution of latest scientific and technologic achievements for common use the premises of industrial infrastructure in transit regions with high number of population, transport communications and life-maintenance systems are becoming more vulnerable. The sorrowful experience of Azerbaijan, where major parts of attacks were aimed at the transport infrastructure serves another prove for the possibility of such scenario. Just imagine, how vulnerable are the Southern Caucasus countries, where realization of huge international projects on restoration of historical "Silk Way", strengthening of Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor, construction of new oil and gas pipelines has already started. If one looks at the map of the Southern Caucasus then he will get convinced that the separatist regime in Nagorno Karabakh is the very source of military, terrorist and subversive threat to the regional economic cooperation, even with Armenia, Azerbaijan so passionately called to by some so called "specialists". In this regard, the position of Azerbaijan Republic should be stressed again: Azerbaijan cannot participate in the regional projects, providing cooperation with Armenia, regardless their attractive appearance, until the occupied Azeri lands are not liberated, military support to the separatist regime in Nagorno Karabakh is not ceased, all issues related with the observance of territorial integrity of the country and return of refugees to the places of permanent residence are not settled.

Fifth, the large-scale and many-headed terror activity is possible only under the terms of purposive support of some state's official bodies. The modern terrorist organizations are powerful and strictly hierarchic structures with logistics corresponding to their scale and not confined to the national boundaries. They have both operative, reconnaissance and security units, and groups of support at their

disposal. Such kind of activity cannot exist without state support. Regarding the terrorist attacks committed in Azerbaijan there are numerous legal evidences proving that they have been arranged by the state agencies of Armenia. Let's dwell particularly upon some of them.

Thanks to the cooperation between the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan Republic and Federal Service of Security of Russia a terrorist group of Armenian separatists operated within the Russian territory and headed by colonel Djan Oganesyanyan, chief of division of the Head department of national security of Armenia, his deputy major Ashot Galoyan and major Boris Simonyan, senior inspector of the Counter-terrorism department of the Federal counter-intelligence service of Russia was arrested. The "TIRR" Association headed by V. Petrosyan located in Moscow was financing that group, which had exploded several trains in Russian and Azerbaijan territory. All of the mentioned persons have been sentenced to different terms of imprisonment by the courts of Russian Federation and Azerbaijan Republic.

The fact of commitment of the explosion of the train in March 19th 1994 at one of the Baku underground railway stations (14 dead, 42 wounded) by members of "Sadval" terrorist separatist organization, operating in Dagestan Republic of Russian Federation, and its arrangement by special services of Republic of Armenia also has been proved through relevant court procedures. Number of witness testimonies and material evidences directly testify that guerrillas of that organization have passed the training on military-subversive activity at the camps of Armenian special services located in Lusoker settlement of Nairi district and Arzni district of Armenia, as well as at the specially created camps at the Magerramkend district of Dagestan Republic. Armenian special services have funded and provided that attack with all necessary explosive materials and technical devices. Azerbaijan special services have revealed 43 organizers and performers of that act, 30 of them were sentenced by the Supreme

Court of Azerbaijan Republic, the quest for the rest part of culprits hiding abroad is going on.

The extraordinary character of this crime is confined in the fact that the special services of one neighboring to Azerbaijan country (Armenia) occupying its territories and sponsoring the separatist regime in the Western part of Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh) have arranged the training for terrorists of the separatist organization seeking some Northern regions of Azerbaijan within the territory of his other neighbor (Russia).

Unfortunately that fact is accompanied by another one. By the end of the year 2000 a group of persons trying to inflame separatist movement in the northern part of Azerbaijan among the Avar people became more active. Several armed raids on the State Traffic Police post, Regional Police station and military regiment, explosion of the monument to Sheikh Shamil in Zagatala-Balakan region have increased the tension since June of 2001. The investigation of those crimes has revealed the fact of contacts between the leader of that group Hadji Magomedov and his lately arrested assistant Shaban Bushdiyev with representatives of Armenian special services. In 1997 both gentlemen visited Yerevan and Khankendi in Nagorno Karabakh where they have discussed the issue of establishment of "Avar state" in Azerbaijan and supplement of 1000 units of automatic firearms and 1 million US dollars for that purpose. Later on they continued their meetings in Makhachkala where they have reached an agreement on supplement of 1000 units of automatic firearms and 300 thousands US dollars. Besides that H. Magomedov in December of 2001 visited Yerevan in order to get support to the idea and activity on establishment of "Djar-Balakan state" by Avar separatists. The main purpose of that visit was to get money and various types of arms, including thermal missiles, to be used in operations planned for spring-summer period like seizure of local authorities buildings, taking of chief officials as hostages whose release would be conditioned by liberation of prisoners.

This is the convincing evidence that the interrelations of separatists of different ethnic manifestations is one of the important elements of the international terrorism.

Finally, the Sixth feature of the terrorism at the globalization stage. These are the problems known as “Harboring of terrorism” and “Apologizing of terrorism”. The states realising this policy create all necessary terms for the terrorists for recreation and rest and provide them with the political shelter after their committing attacks in other countries, encourage dirty information campaigns oriented to the apologizing of terrorism. But the attempts to make national heroes or fighters for just cause out of the terrorists are more dangerous because they contribute to the bringing up of young generation in the spirit of terrorist fighting traditions. There is a fair ground for the inclusion of Republic of Armenia into the number of such countries, because Armenia carries out the state policy of rehabilitation for the activists of the international Armenian terrorist groups, who in 70-80’s committed explosions at the “Orly” airport, Moscow underground, murder of Turkish diplomats in Switzerland and Greece, seizure of Turkish Embassy in Paris and other crimes. For instance, the famous international terrorist Monte Melkonyan, who had carried out terror attacks in France, after his liberation in 1990 had found a shelter in Armenia and later gone to Nagorno Karabakh where he had headed terrorist organizations responsible for massacres and expulsion of Azeri people. Armenian state officials, including president, have attended at his funerals in Yerevan in 1993 and later on he had been posthumously proclaimed a national hero of Armenia. Other well known terrorists Grant Markaryan and Vazgen Sislyan, one of the organizers of the seizure of Turkish Embassy in Paris in 1981, for their active engagement in the terrorist attacks against Azerbaijan were conferred with the titles of Karabakh war heroes.

The international community could not remain indifferent to those processes and has undertaken, in the last 10 years, a number of important steps to provide legal protection from terrorism and separatism, both on the level of national legislation, as well as within

the framework of international law. All those documents view terrorism and aggressive separatism as linked and interrelated in creating threats to sovereignty, constitutional order, and territorial integrity.

Such an approach is reflected in basic UN documents. Declaration on Principles of International Law Dealing with Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the UN Charter reaffirms definitions of “territorial integrity” and “territorial inviolability” as core principles of international law, which regulates the whole international relations system.

That principle is enshrined in the Declaration on Measures of Elimination of International Terrorism, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1994, to serve as a an international-legal basis for all future documents regulating cooperation in combating terrorism. The Declaration, as well as the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, state, in the very first paragraphs, that the UN members condemn all sorts of terror, including those, which pose threat to friendly relations among states and nations, and endanger territorial integrity and security of the states.

It is worth noting that those multilateral documents clearly point at the interrelation between terror and threats to the territorial integrity. Therefore the interdependence between terrorism and separatism is confirmed on the convention-based level, with that confirmation being universally acknowledged by the international law.

There is further argumentation supporting international legal grounds for using definitions of “terrorism” and “separatism” in a single context. But the most important argument is the deterioration of situation in the regions, where separatism became foundation for terror. Only forms and methods of the “terrorist erosion” have changed, with ethnic separatism being complemented by religious one, local ethnic conflicts and individual acts of terror growing into full-scale hostilities and permanent terrorist activity.

In this regard, creation of a global international legal basis for combating terrorism and separatism can become a vital direction of international cooperation. It deals primarily with the necessity to elaborate universally recognized law definitions of “terrorism”, “aggressive separatism”, “organized crime” as specific crimes, in their capacity of transnational illegal activity. It includes the need to work out appropriate forms and methods of reacting to these crimes through international cooperation.

The above-mentioned features of the terrorism at the globalization stage predetermine the necessity of deepening international cooperation of special services of all countries of the world, which should be based upon the following basic principles:

First, Strict counteraction to any attempts to give antiterrorist struggle some confessional or ethnic colors. Terrorism has neither religion, nor nation.

Second, Abandonment of “double standards” policies with regard to terrorism, extremism and separatism. Neither state can effectively combat these on its territory and ignore (or, sometimes, support) them in any other state.

Third, Acceptance of the “everywhere and always” principle envisaging that every state would assume an obligation to prevent criminal activity, search, detect and punish and/or extradite criminals regardless of time and location.

Fourth, Adoption of coordinated sanctions against the states one-way or another supporting terrorist, extremist and separatist activity on the territory of other states.

Following these principles, the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan Republic consistently works on the activation of cooperation with some states’ special services in sphere of combating terrorism and separatism. For example, the close cooperation with the Russian special services resulted in arrest and institution of legal proceedings against Azer Aslanov, who was commissioned by

Armenian special services to explode a train moving along the Baku underground railroad in June 3rd 1994 (14 dead, 54 wounded).

Terrorism is closely linked to the aggressive separatism, organized crime, drug trade, trafficking in arms and human beings. Existence of conflict zones and occupied or uncontrollable territories is the haven for terrorist and criminal groups. The occupational regimes, having violated the norms and principles of international law, democratic values and human rights, threaten not only their own population but also the population of other countries. The mentioned problem is particularly critical for the region of Caucasus, where the actions of separatist regime of Nagorno Karabakh have created fertile soil for terrorist activity. Azerbaijan also suffers from terrorist acts, while members of various terrorist organizations find shelter in its occupied territories; and drug and weapon trafficking, money-laundering operations take place in these regions. Those facts were reflected in the US Department of State 2001 Report. Therefore, as a state that faces this evil, Azerbaijan Republic resolutely condemns all forms and manifestations of terrorism and aggressive separatism that bring disaster to thousands of individuals.