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Preface

Dear readers,

Welcome to the seventh newsletter of the FP6-project on Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law (TTSRL). The full text of the six previous newsletters as well as a selection of our research papers can be found on our project website <http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu>.

In this newsletter, we present the next set of results, focusing on the research findings of Deliverable 2 – Workpackage 2 – titled: “*The evolving threat of terrorism in Policymaking and Media Discourse*”. This newsletter contains an abstract of the report and its main conclusions, the full version of which can be found on our website, or by clicking [here](#). Policy recommendations will be published in the forthcoming policy brief.

For this Deliverable, we conducted research on the history and main characteristics of the counterterrorism policies of eleven European countries (and also Australia, Canada and the United States). We combined these results with quantitative data obtained by using a text mining tool (PARANOID) that allowed us to analyze media reports from the selected countries. These sets of data were the basis used to study the media discourse on security and terrorism in those states from 1997 to 2006. This information gave us a contextualized framework in which to consider the milestones in counterterrorism policymaking and their impact on the media.

In light of the success of the TTSRL-consortium’s previous newsletters, this edition too will provide you with a comprehensive overview of the main body of the research carried out. We look forward to receiving your comments and would like to discuss our findings with you during our TTSRL conference in Brussels, which will be held in February 2009.

On behalf of the entire TTSRL-consortium,

Vidal Martin

Researcher TTSRL

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Summary of Deliverable 2

The [full text of this deliverable](#), including literature annotations and sources is available on the [publications section of the TTSRL-website](#).

The survey of academic literature on notions of security presented in deliverable 1 enabled a set of conclusions concerning the fit of transnational terrorism into the conceptual development of security. We have shown that in recent years transnational terrorism has come to be appreciated as a prominent threat to international and European security. Transnational terrorism is one of the issues which are increasingly viewed through the security prism. The perceived threat of transnational terrorism has had a major effect on EU Member States' counterterrorism strategies, both individually and collectively. Recent high-profile terrorist attacks have generated a heightened and shared sense of urgency, although significant national variations remain. These attacks led to a convergence in threat perceptions among member states and to a gradual harmonization of states' counterterrorism measures. The heightened attention for terrorism at an EU level is based on the perception that the EU is not merely a likely target for terrorist attacks, but also an important stage for preparatory and logistic purposes. Recent terrorist attacks have also led to an intensification of the fight against terrorism at an EU level, including increased cooperation with non-EU countries.

We generated four research questions to analyze this media discourse:

- Is there a heightened sense of urgency *vis-à-vis* the phenomenon of terrorism?
- Is terrorism primarily reported on as foreign news or is it related to the homeland?
- To what extent is terrorism framed as a threat?
- Are military or rights-issues more often discussed in relation to terrorism?
- Is terrorism framed primarily in national terms or is the EU also mentioned?

Objectives of the report

In this report we empirically test literature findings through an analysis of developments in policymaking and media discourse at both national and international levels. The objective of deliverable 2 is to analyze the policy discourse on 'security' within the European Union, both at the national level and at the EU level. In addition to this objective, we analyze the media discourse on terrorism in European countries as well as in a number of non-European countries, based on the assumption that the media discourse is an important element in policy decisions as well as an indicator of public perceptions of the

issue. The emphasis of the report is on the securitization of transnational terrorism in different national and international contexts. We examine the role that terrorism has played in policymaking and media discourse in the sample countries: when it started to emerge and how it was incorporated, if at all, in the development of overall security concepts and policy options.

The analysis takes the Member States included in the research sample as a starting point: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, the Czech Republic and Portugal. The sample is based on the criteria of including a representative sample of the European Union (various sizes, various levels of wealth, old and new Member States, geographical spread). Several other key players are also included in the analysis, notably Russia, Canada, the United States and Australia.

The statistical analysis of media discourse was performed through the use of TNO's Program for Advanced Retrieval and Navigation On Intelligence Data (PARANOID). This innovative program for data retrieval and analysis enables researchers and policymakers to distil information from unstructured sources through data-mining, text-interpretation and a range of storage and analysis tools. PARANOID enables the researcher to conduct quantitative analysis from qualitative sources, such as newspapers, in a fraction of the time this normally requires. It is our explicit aim to compare the findings of PARANOID with the results of the literature survey conducted for this report and for deliverable 1. This comparison will be of major importance to the scientific and practical contributions of the TTSRL research project to the study of terrorism and to counterterrorism policies.

Conclusions

As a final result of our research efforts, we present a concise set of conclusions:

1. In all European and non-European countries included in the research sample, the events of 9/11 enhanced both policy and media perceptions of the threat of transnational terrorism to national and international security. The events led to a growing sense of urgency in media discourse and to the expansion of counter-terrorism policies and international cooperation, also in countries with little or no previous experience with terrorism. This confirms the observation made in deliverable 1 that recent high-profile terrorist attacks generated a convergence in the sense of urgency concerning terrorism in different European countries, leading to a gradual harmonization of states' anti-terrorism measures.
2. After the immediate shock effect of 9/11, the sense of urgency in media discourse declined and then stabilized at a level considerably higher than that prior to 2001. In some countries this stabilization occurred sooner than in others, largely depending on domestic specificities in the evolving threat of terrorism. This trend corresponds with developments in national security



policies, which have been characterized by a continuing focus on terrorism and related issues (e.g. migration, Islamic fundamentalism, protection of critical infrastructures, military interventions). It should be noted, however, that significant variations in threat perceptions remain with regard to the sense of urgency in both policymaking and media discourse. The present situation is best characterized as a combination of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties with regard to the sense of urgency in policymaking and media discourse.

3. Generally, in the countries included in the research sample, the attacks on 9/11 led to much greater responses in the media than later high-profile attacks. Subsequent terrorist attacks did not have the same impact on the sense of urgency in media discourse as 9/11 did. Whereas the effect of the latter was truly global in its scale, the former primarily had serious domestic or regional consequences for the perceived threat of terrorism. Examples of high-profile terrorist attacks with a strong domestic or regional impact on threat perceptions and policymaking are the Bali bombings (2002), the attacks in Madrid (2004), the hostage takings by Chechen terrorists in Moscow (2002) and in Beslan (2004), the aircraft hijackings and explosions perpetrated by the Black Widows (2004), the assassination of film producer Theo van Gogh (2004) and the bombings in London (2005). These incidents merely had a major impact on domestic and, in some cases, regional threat perceptions. This seems to confirm the thesis that the smaller the geographical and physical distance from terrorist attacks, the larger the impact on the sense of urgency will be. Yet the validity of this thesis cannot be fully assumed, since in a number of countries the Madrid and London attacks had little or no effect on media discourse despite their comparatively close proximity to the targeted countries.
4. It could be argued that the aforementioned finding supports the general notion that the attacks of 9/11 were a 'shock' that opened the eyes of most countries to the fact that such events were possible, whereas subsequent attacks contributed to maintaining a heightened sense of awareness to the subject of terrorism but did not affect the sense of terrorism as a threat to the respective countries. This is somewhat surprising, given that the attacks in Madrid and London took place in Europe and thus 'closer to home'. At the same time, the recent terrorist attacks did sustain policy attention for terrorism at both national, EU and international levels, evidence of which is the continuing expansion and refinement of counter-terrorism policies.
5. The transnational dimensions of terrorism have increasingly been addressed in policymaking in the countries included in the research sample. Whereas historically terrorism was predominantly viewed as an internal issue, in recent years transnational terrorism has come to be framed as a fundamental threat to both national and global security. This trend was also observed in deliverable 1, which showed that recent terrorist attacks led to an intensification of the fight against terrorism not only at a national but also at an international and EU level. This development would presuppose a growing



balance in media reporting on domestic versus foreign dimensions of terrorism (RQ3) and on domestic versus EU issues (RQ4). This relative shift is only partly reflected in media discourse, which continues to focus principally on domestic rather than non-domestic issues related to terrorism. Moreover, terrorism is generally more reported on in domestic terms than in EU terms.

6. Regarding the analyses of terrorism within the security discourse, it appears that there are great differences between countries. Generally, it does appear that it is more often the government than the parliament that dictates the discourse, while the number of experts playing a role in this debate is relatively limited to non-existent.
7. The number of laws and official statements found in relation to articles on terrorism, also led to differing results per country. All sample countries did give some scores on both these issues, yet there did not appear to be a consistent process. The only general trend that could be dissected is that all sample countries have experienced an increase in these sorts of articles in and after 2002. This corresponds well with the proposals and implementation of new legislation and counterterrorism policies.



Upcoming Events

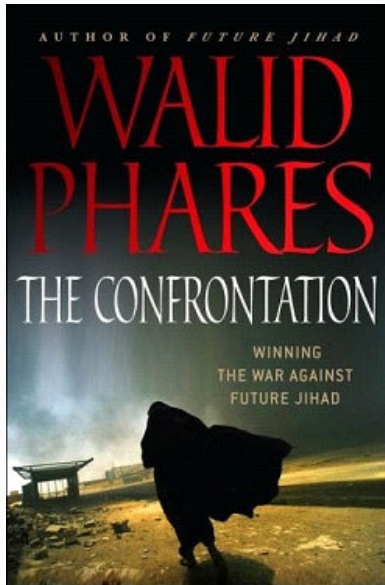
The following events are interesting in relation to transnational terrorism:

- 6th Annual International Counter-Terrorism Officers Association Conference (October 21–23, 2008 in San Antonio, Texas)
<http://www.ictoa.org/events.html>
- Workshop 'Coordinating global and regional efforts to combat WMD terrorism' (24 October, 2008, Rome)
<http://www.iai.it/>
- Seminar 'Counter-Terrorism Legislation and Jurisprudence in the EU: Evaluating Their Impact in the Criminal Justice Area' (Trier, 5-7 November 2008)
http://www.era.int/web/en/resources/5_1796_7619_file_en.12080.pdf
- Terrorism Seminar 2009 'Preparing Law Enforcement for Threats to National Security' (9-12 March 2009, Center for Terrorism Law at St. Mary's University School of Law, San Antonio, Texas)
<http://www.stmarytx.edu/ctl/content/events/eventsIntro.html>



The Reading Corner

Phares, Walid (2008), *The Confrontation: Winning the War against Future Jihad*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.



This is the third book that Walid Phares has published on Islamic terrorism after 9/11 (the first was *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against the West*, followed by *The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracy*). In this third book, written as Iraq and Afghanistan have an increasing impact on the American administration and also in the international community, Phares argues that to win this conflict, we need to identify the threat, know why the enemy is advancing in some areas and develop a long-term strategy to change the balance of power.

According to Phares, there are two main Jihadist networks: the *Salafists* (Al Qaeda and its allies) and the *Khomeinists* (who are led by Iran and include groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah). The Salafists are guided by a global goal: the establishment of a worldwide Muslim empire or caliphate. Phares points out that this long-term goal is not a reaction to US policy toward the Middle East nor toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, and therefore will not be affected by changes in that field. The West did not identify this growing threat during the 1990s and there is currently an ongoing “war of ideas” in the Arab and Muslim world.

Phares suggests that the War on Terror must be redefined in order to reflect “globally” on the threat posed by Jihad. In this sense, serious effort should be devoted to increasing international cooperation and also supporting democratic actors in the Arab and Muslim world in order to isolate the radicals. Phares believes that the end of the jihadist threat will only come with a democratic revolution in the Muslim world. It is possible to defeat this enemy if the situation is clearly understood in Western societies, and also if political, economic and diplomatic changes are made to prevent terrorists from using our systems and needs against us. The only effective way to counter the jihadist threat, he concludes, is to use the “political culture of democracy”.



Weimann, Gabriel (2006), *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (USIP Press Books).

The Internet is becoming one of the most important battlegrounds for terrorism. In this book, Gabriel Weiman analyzes the use (or misuse) of the Internet by different terrorist organizations. The intrinsic complexity of the Internet is an advantage for these groups as they can act in an anonymous way and take advantage of Internet's easily accessible nature to deliver their messages globally to a variety of audiences.

The author examines how modern terrorist organizations exploit the Internet to raise funds, recruit followers and spread propaganda, as well as to plan and launch attacks and publicize their chilling results. Weimann also investigates the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures in this field and their possible social costs in terms of civil rights.

Gabriel Weimann, Professor of Communication at the University of Haifa in Israel, is one of the few specialists who has been tracking terrorist web sites over the last decade, from the basic and simple designs of the 1990s to the current, well-designed Al Qaeda-inspired sites, chat rooms, forums and media producers. Weimann argues that jihadist groups see the Internet not only as an important tool in spreading terrorist goals and methods and a way to reach followers and recruits, but also as a broader link to mainstream Arab and Muslim populations.

