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## **THE DILEMMA OF PRESENT DAY: GUERRILLA, TERRORIST AND ASYMMETRIC WARFARE**

**KEYWORDS:** Terrorism, international security, asymmetric warfare.

**ABSTRACT:** In order to describe the environment surrounding us, so complex in terms of relations resulting from using violence, we easily employ terms such as ‘partisan’ or ‘militant’, just in order to define the very same ones as terrorists a while later. Probably the benchmark of contemporary description, especially of political action is the lack of clear-cut attitudes. Terrorism is nothing new, and this statement in itself is not very revealing. However, for many contemporary researchers of this issue, there is never too much information. Terrorism has always accompanied the history of oppressive regimes as well as resistance movements and uprisings. All the same, within the anti-colonial insurrectionary movements of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century which led to the fall of European colonial empires over a short period of time, terrorism achieved new quality. It should also be emphasized that it achieved considerable political successes compared to the social-revolutionary terrorism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The attribute ‘terrorist’ serves as an excluding one in different relations. By employing such term, one that their cause is an unconventional one – leastways as long as specific ways of using violence are applied. On the other hand, groups classified as terrorist ones often describe themselves as partisans who are fighting for the liberation of certain social or ethnic groups and who have to employ “unconventional” methods of using force because of the military superiority of the oppressive regime. By describing certain actions as ‘terrorist’ one usually intends on bereaving it of every sort of political legitimation. Is there any aspect that terrorism and guerrilla actions have in common? In certain socio-revolutionary or ethno-separatist strategies of violence, the concept of terrorism consists in the idea of a ‘starter’ which is to create the conditions to commence the guerrilla war. There could also be groups acting as partisans on one front line, and as terrorists on the other. The example is Al-Qaeda: in Central Asia its network operated only temporarily, as a kind of guerrilla, while in the global scale it employed terrorist strategy.

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The definition of terrorism is still a disputable matter, out of numerous reasons<sup>3</sup> resulting from the political, social and content-related issues. It is extremely difficult to determine whether an Afghan highlander fighting against Soviet intervention is already a terrorist or whether he becomes one when he applies the same methods of action against the Afghan

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<sup>1</sup> G. Babiński, M. Kapiszewska, *Zrozumieć współczesność*, Warszawa 2009, p. 272., cf. *Zmiany globalne i globalne zagrożenia*, for more, see: [www.zd.eco.pl/zb/123/globalne](http://www.zd.eco.pl/zb/123/globalne) (accessed: 27.10.2014).

<sup>2</sup> R. Stark, *Cyber Terrorism: Rethinking New technology*, <http://www.infowar.com> (accessed: 27.10.2014).

<sup>3</sup> *Encyklopedia zagadnień międzynarodowych*, edited by E. Cała-Wacinkiewicz, R. Podgórzńska, D. Wacinkiewicz, Warszawa 2011, pp. 865–866, entry: *terroryzm* and the derivatives (accessed: 27.10.2014).

government. Therefore, the problems with using the term 'terrorism' result not only from the substantive difficulties emerging at the attempt of making a taxonomic distinction between terrorism, crime and guerrilla war. The problem certainly has not originated recently.

The concept of terrorism no longer includes guerrilla war, which can implement some of the terrorists' means with the aim of seizing the power over the state. The notion of terrorism rather incorporates the intentions of groups or individuals whose goals are totally contradictory to the ultimate exercising of state authority. In this respect, terror is equal to a form of social suicide. Among those who use violence, there have always been 'madmen' meant as individuals who act against the principal rules and attitudes predominant in the given society. These 'suicides of the society' – belonging to margin groups, using extreme force, willing, to a greater or smaller extent, to sacrifice their lives – usually were not the main actors in the large-scale wars. The Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Faction in Germany, Action Directe in France and the Cellules Communistes Combattantes in Belgium- all of them used force, but no one claimed it was war in its ordinary meaning. However, it is indisputable with regard to the attacks on World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001; just as the boundary between the destructive effect of using conventional and non-conventional weapons is blurred.<sup>4</sup>

Terrorist means are equally destructive as the tools of conventional wars. As the weapons are becoming more accessible, it will be more difficult to differentiate between the range of destruction caused by such

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<sup>4</sup> Today, as probably never before, it is easy to come into possession of weapon, and I do not mean here the weapon associated with the guaranteed civil liberties. In minutes, with the help of the Internet, we can become the owners of combat resources, on the possession of which in the military arsenal debate the parliamentary commissions. Hand bombs used by the nineteenth-century anarchists or the Kalashnikovs used by the terrorists from the 1970s were able to kill tens, but not thousands. Employing non-conventional explosives on the planes, or in car and truck bombs makes them closer to the scale of military operations. The access to the weapons of mass destruction may cause that terrorists will have a larger capability to kill – thousands or tens of thousands of victims in one attack. Today, these secrets of the analysts more and more often reach the public. They cannot be disregarded by the contemporary militaries, although they are not included in all the instructions.

groups and the war damage. Furthermore, since these groups act within the frames of a particular society, the threat cannot be eradicated with the help of conventional military forces or military deterrence.<sup>5</sup> I would like to bring this to the attention of all those willing to wage 'war against terrorism' with the use of armed forces. The aim of terrorism is evoking fear of an unexpected and brutal death. The target is not the destruction of the railway lines, transport facilities of buildings, but arousing fright. Obviously, the acts of killing are not always necessary, but there is no doubt that they are the easiest means to achieve the goal. Thus, terrorism should be defined as the conduct which will employ various forms of violence directed at the society, with the aim of presenting a standpoint or particular political will. Terrorist strategies are not oriented at the immediate physical results of violence, but at its psychological consequences.<sup>6</sup> The weapon of contemporary terrorism are the means causing this fear, which means that we can talk about the definite targets of terrorist actions and their constituents.

Is there any aspect that terrorism and guerrilla actions have in common? Considering the arguments presented above, the answer might seem to be negative, but it is just the contrary. In certain dimension, we deal with war, according to the definition of war by Clausewitz, as "an act of violence aimed at forcing the opponent to carry out our will."<sup>7</sup> Thus, there must be political will which might be assigned

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<sup>5</sup> In consequence, prevention from and the countermeasures taken against terrorism will become much more important in the field of security and the defensive policy. The armed forces have to adapt to the new circumstances. Thus, the role of commanders of the special operations and the forces subordinate to them will be enhanced. Creating special units and conducting research on the neutralisation of chemical and biological weapons will become a priority. The rank achieved by the soldiers in the special operations and specialised units reflect the genuine scale of task importance.

<sup>6</sup> G. Buchan, *Information Warfare and the Air Force: Wave of future? Current Fad?*, Washington 1996, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> C. Clausewitz, *O wojnie*, Warszawa 1958, Vol. 1–5, p. 17.

the decision on the kind and size of violence used<sup>8</sup>. In certain socio-revolutionary or ethno-separatist strategies of violence, the concept of terrorism consists in the idea of a 'starter' which is to create the conditions to commence the guerrilla war. There could also be groups acting as partisans on one front line, and as terrorists on the other. The example is Al-Qaeda: in Central Asia its network operated only temporarily, as a kind of guerrilla, while in the global scale it employed terrorist strategy.

All of it happens in the eyes of television viewers. We are all potential addressees of terrorist actions. Not only managers creating the demand for washing powders making the laundry whiter than the others or high-calorie bars as light as a feather (we can only associate these forms) have realised this fact. Nowadays, the power of TV transmission is exploited by the marketing specialists. A contemporary initiator of a terrorist action probably devotes the same amount of time on constructing the bomb as on assessing the reliability of television channels.<sup>9</sup> The dynamic technological progress, globalisation of the information systems caused technical and operational changes in terrorist actions and changes in the terrorists' motivations and objectives. The increase in the number of conflicts and tensions on ethnic, religious, ideological or social grounds caused that terrorism began to assume new forms and has become the means of solving the existing problems in the global scale. In the military aspect it has led e.g. to the disappearance of the classic (state-conducted) character of war.<sup>10</sup>

Is terrorism the guerrilla of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Or perhaps we ought to verify our point of view? Clausewitz described battle as measuring the moral and physical forces with the help of the latter. Paraphrasing this formula, we might define terrorism as an attack with the use of

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<sup>8</sup> R. Potocki, D. Miłoszewska, *Rewolucja wyborcza' jako forma zmiany politycznej*, [in:] *Racja stanu: studia i materiały*, 2011, No. 1, pp. 219–236; cf. J. Zdanowski, *Bliski Wschód: bunt czy rewolucja*, Kraków 2011, pp. 159–169.

<sup>9</sup> Both sides are aware of the significance of the media in presenting the issues discussed here, as it is proved by the case of Arabic television channel, Al Jazeera.

<sup>10</sup> H. Münkler, *Wojny naszych czasów*, Kraków 2004, p. 7.

minimum physical force directly onto the moral potential of the opponents, their will of self-determination and forcing through their own objectives. Likewise guerrilla operations, also terrorist actions are by definition designed to avoid direct confrontation with the opponent's forces. Both guerrilla and terrorist forces are aware of their weakness, and confrontation with armed forces is poignant for guerrillas and terrorists alike. Terrorists are not capable of combating the opponent on equal terms. Therefore, the guerrilla and terrorist actions are directed against the potential in similar manner, i.e. with the aim of exhausting it. However, these are the only similarities. The military success of guerrilla actions has always implied material damage, while for terrorists the decisive constituent of damage is the issue of its mental, not material dimension for the victims. The devastating force of terrorist operations does not consist in inflicting considerable damage to the infrastructure of the assaulted countries, to factories, shopping centres, control systems and transportation networks. Terrorists will not conduct typical guerrilla actions.<sup>11</sup> Partisans' objective is the disruption of the material infrastructure of the system they are attacking, whereas terrorists wish to destroy the mental infrastructure. Partisans attack the police and the army from an ambush. Terrorists will direct their actions via an attack on the society and their collective sense of security. The deadly bomb attacks on American military bases in Beirut and Riyadh were terrorist operations, not guerrilla armed hostilities, since they were not aimed at physical weakening of the troops.<sup>12</sup> The terrorists' messages nearly always have two addressees. First of all, they are directed at the assaulted ones, in order to make them realise their powerlessness and to signalise that by continuing military involvement in the given

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<sup>11</sup> The partisans' forces that stand up against the regular troops are weaker in number and definitely backward as regards weaponry and training. However, they have to be numerous enough to be able to create a situation of constant danger in many places at the same time. It is not so in the case of terrorists; they would not be capable of standing a brief military confrontation with regular armed forces, so typical for guerrilla warfare, both due to the size and to weaponry.

<sup>12</sup> They were a message directed at American politicians, and especially at the citizens of the United States. The exceptional demonstration of their troops' defenselessness in the face of attacks such as in Liban or in Saudi Arabia was to force the Americans to retreat without entering a long-lasting military confrontation.

region, or, to put it in a more generalised way, by maintaining their political will, they must take into account the political costs like considerable damage and losses. Thus, acts of terrorism actually pose a question whether the opposing party is willing to incur the costs of such attacks also for the second or third time.<sup>13</sup> However, a terrorist action also incorporates another message. It is directed at the third party which one wishes to acquire for the cause with the help of the acts of violence, namely those on whose behalf the terrorists fight, according to their own declaration.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, acts of terrorism are not only a signal for the assaulted authority. They are also targeted at the side one wishes to win over.<sup>15</sup> It depends on the particular case which of the addressees of the twofold message is more important.<sup>16</sup>

Numerous politicians who joined the UN General Assembly in the 1960s, had been stigmatised and pursued as partisans shortly before. Guerilla movements led by them, usually attracted attention in the initial stage

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<sup>13</sup> The attacked authority usually is not willing to change its objectives and intentions without reason, under pressure from an evidently small group. Otherwise, the states could be freely blackmailed by the threat of using violence.

<sup>14</sup> They might be, depending on the ideological orientation of the terrorist groups, ethnic or religious minorities in a state, for whom terrorists fight for particular rights or political independence; they might be the socially disadvantaged or politically marginalised strata, whom terrorists wish to liberate by way of revolution; last, but not least, it might be a religiously defined civilisation which is to recover the honour and self-respect through armed struggle, propagated for instance by armed Islamist formations.

<sup>15</sup> J. Czerep, *Kryzys w Sahelu – Kontynuacja wojny w Libii*, Fundacja Aleksandra Kwaśniewskiego „Amicus Europae”, „Policy Papers” 2012, No. 16; J. Mittelstaedt et al., *Ferment z Arabii*, „Forum”, 9–16 July 2012, pp. 6–9.

<sup>16</sup> Terrorist actions are usually addressed at the attacked authority. Terrorists, as a basically weaker party, are in the longer perspective forced to win over the potential supporters to their side and mobilise them, if they are willing to achieve political success. However, at the same time it appears that there is a considerable difference between ordinary terrorists – from the nineteenth-century Russian anarchists to left-wing extremist formations of the 1970s and 1980s – and the participants of the new terrorist wars. The former assumed the existence of the acquired third party a priori and only saw the necessity of activating it, whereas in the new forms of terrorism, the third party in question does not only need to be activated, but has to be created as a political entity.

of their activity by committing terrorist acts against colonial authority. The pivotal innovations in the realm of guerrilla warfare were introduced in the Near East and North Africa and spread widely, finding many followers. The internationalisation of their activity which commenced with spectacular aircraft hijackings by Palestinian groups, substantially contributed to eradicating the limits of violence and extended the range of communication forms by the terrorist message.<sup>17</sup> However, combat was assigned an explicit terrorist stigma due to the lack of interconnection between military calculation and economic rationality. Unlike terrorists, partisans have to conduct operations for the distant, yet victorious ending. They have to take into account not only economic costs, but also the social ones, e.g. through legitimisation and seeking support for their struggle. Terrorists do not have to, and even do not intend to win the war, as Münkler argues. It is enough when they maintain it on the appropriate level of violence, until it becomes unbearable for the society.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, a question arises: what allowed the concepts of terrorist activity achieve such position?

In my opinion, the emancipation of terrorism is the effect of combining violence with the possibilities of media coverage and open access do the media in the assaulted countries. Relatively limited use of violence allows to achieve maximum effects. If the media are scarce, not diversified enough or if the information is subject to political censorship, terrorist strategies have little chance to be successful. Without media reinforcement, the physical consequences of the inflicted violence are too small. The attack on World Trade Center is no exception here, and the venue of the attack

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<sup>17</sup> A new rule has been in operation ever since: the larger the damage is and the higher the number of victims, the wider the interest with the issue and the more lasting the success of the terrorist act. The authors of the attacks of 11th September 2001 followed exactly this new strategic rule of the international terrorism.

<sup>18</sup> In a similar manner, also terrorism has become independent over the past decades as an autonomous strategy, not necessarily associated with guerrilla warfare or other primordially military forms of operations. However, it does not directly turn against the economy of the assaulted country, exploiting the economic orientation dominant there, focusing on revenue and profit, to which it would oppose its own uncompromising determination and readiness to make sacrifices.



is also of significance.<sup>19</sup> Such exploitation of the infrastructure has nothing to do with “urban guerrilla warfare”, so popular in the 1960s and 1970s among numerous formations described as terrorist ones. In their activities, partisans discerned the society whose support they wanted to win over in order to induce a general uprising. Contemporary terrorists do not treat society as a potential ally, but as an enemy. Their aim is not to trigger an insurrection, but spreading fear which can easily lead to the collapse of economy and democratic modes of action. Finally, fear and terror might be durably spread with the use of spectacular attacks, with the aim of striking on everyday life. Utilising civilian infrastructure for the aims of the terrorists is the easier and has the more serious consequences, the more dense and complex the communication and transportation systems of the attacked country are. It happens so, starting from using post for sending letter bombs or letters containing anthrax bacteria, to the attacks of computer viruses and other forms of interference with information and control systems of the attacked country. Last, but not least, terrorism draws considerable benefits from the exploitation of the political, legal, and moral self-imposed limits of the victim to its own advantage. Therefore, for terrorists, an attack on democratic, post-industrial societies with high media activity is so dramatic in terms of their reception. The aim of the attacks by terrorist groups is the fragile of the highly developed societies.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, agricultural societies, authoritarian or totalitarian states and finally societies of low informational activity, with one or two television channels are not the target of spectacular assaults. The events in Mogadishu became probably one of the key experiences for Osama bin Laden and his strategists, on which the following attacks of al-Qaeda’s network were based.

Media are the next vital factor allowing to differentiate between guerrilla and terrorist activities. The contemporary world, susceptible to constant conflicts is linked by a network of electronic connections, in which the mass media (commonly ‘the media’) play enormous role. As “the

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<sup>19</sup> *Paradoks amerykańskiej potęgi*, an interview with Z. Brzeziński, [http:// www.new-europe.com](http://www.new-europe.com) (accessed: 27.10.2014).

<sup>20</sup> D. Held, *Democracy and the Global Order. From Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Oxford 1997, pp. 34–38.

fourth power” they do not only provide and disseminate information, but also form opinions, awareness and attitudes of the audience, thus being a perfect tool for manipulation. Attacks that have little significance from the military point of view, are amplified manifold and repeatedly shown by the media.<sup>21</sup> Efficiency, predictability, comprehensiveness, directness, accessibility, speed and practically unlimited reach are the qualities of the contemporary media, and therefore they fall prey of clever manipulators who do not always have good intentions. This is why the media play a significant role as a tool employed in the present-day conflicts. It was exactly so on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 during terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York. Those who are not able to attack the opponent’s conventional armed forces with the use of military assets, attempt to disseminate the images that enable direct sensory experiencing of the consequences of using violence. Not only the photographs documenting the violence towards soldiers evoke fear, as the images of killed women and children are also shown. The latter photographs, regardless whether they are authentic or counterfeit, are directed against political will. At the same time, the aggressors assume that the attacked opponent is not able to pay such a high price in the long run.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the images of violence and its consequences usually include the message suggesting that next time the price might be higher. Assuredly, America and Europe have now a lot of money and free time to invest in another fallen state- a Harvard professor Stephen Walt commented ironically on his blog.<sup>23</sup>

In this sense, the medially staged, symbolic confrontation between small groups of warriors determined to go to any lengths and not afraid of death, with the economically and militarily dominant, post-heroically oriented powers and societies is the indispensable part of the combat itself. From this perspective, terrorism represents such form of conducting warfare, in which the armed struggle functions as the drive wheel of the

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<sup>21</sup> The changing position of the media in the Vietnam or Iraq wars is a perfect example of it.

<sup>22</sup> *Stany Zjednoczone Zachodu*, an interview with Samuel Huntington, „Wprost”, No. 991, 25.11.2001.

<sup>23</sup> M. Zawadzki, *USA czekają na nową Libię*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, No. 246, 21.10. 2011, p. 5.

proper image war. The transformation of war reports into the means of conducting it was probably the milestone in the course of asymmetrisation of warfare. It enabled the introduction of new terrorist methods, and as a result undermined the military asymmetries. The latest manifestations of terrorism acting on an international scale are characterised by combining violence with media presentation. Terrorism is a strategy which utilises violence to stage spectacular events incorporating the message described above. The images are to sensitise world audience to the given problem and exert pressure on governments to undertake definite actions. They also serve the purpose of advertising particular organisations aimed at mobilising the donators in wealthy industrialised states.<sup>24</sup> The expansion of terrorism in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is not thus based on the revolution in the means of inflicting violence. The country is in the state of chaos, which makes it easier to recruit new members – claims Abu Salman from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb – there is a lot of work ahead of us.<sup>25</sup>

Partisans, as it usually happened in the history of conventional wars, looked for the members. Terrorists make use of the media revolution. Terrorist operations are events of high level of mediality, where the news in the classic sense were replaced by images. The production of spectacular images caused that letters containing the confession to committing the act of terror, in which the groups used to present their motives and objectives of their actions, have become useless.<sup>26</sup> Terrorists' orientation on the media reinforcement of the effects of violence apparently limited their size, the scale of damage and the number of victims.<sup>27</sup> Terrorists need to break through in the media. "Media hype" is a challenge for terrorists of any kind. The escalation spiral of the terrorist violence is spinning faster and faster for the media coverage. When terrorists' 'message' is broadcast

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<sup>24</sup> R. Stefanicki, *Islamskie państwo Syria*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, No. 8, 11.01.2014, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> R. Stefanicki, *Dżihad wraca do Libii*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, No. 61, 15.03. 2011, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> R. Marrouch, *Ekstremizm zabija Syrię*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, No. 221, 21.08. 2013, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Dynamite and firearms used by terrorists since the end of the 19th century will remain the favourite weaponry of terrorist groups, but even a threat of using weapons of mass destruction will generate more extensive media coverage.

only with the use of images, it becomes clear for the neutral recipients. Partisans used to employ an idea (at least in the past) and their struggle received the air of liberation. As a consequence, it had to be comprehensible. Acts of terror convey their message by means of bare images. Nowadays, the images of terrorist actions are targeted at a politically unaware addressee, the audience of the television cookery shows and soap operas, i.e. at housewives, the elderly and children. The motive, problem, cause or ideology are no longer significant.<sup>28</sup> Thus, terrorism does not use violence to bring about a straightforward effect. The direct objective of terrorist activity is not killing of one or two hundred people. The aim is above all killing, spectacular killing.<sup>29</sup> Corporate media foster the machinery of violence.<sup>30</sup> International terrorism replaced communism from the times of the Cold War in this role, and conducting the global war on terror is necessary.

Multitude of event that have taken place on the arena of international political relations over the recent years, led to a considerable expansion of the issues corresponding the concept of asymmetric war.<sup>31</sup> Partisan actions are often incorporated in the scope of this notion. Out of its nature, an asymmetric armed conflict is a conflict in which the opposing parties possess unequal military potentials which causes that the weaker side cannot expect a success in a classic military confrontation and has to resort to unconventional methods and means of warfare or effectively make use of a particular weakness of the stronger opponent. These means include e.g. attacks with the use of biological or chemical weapons, and in the future even atomic weaponry, while the methods of action still com-

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<sup>28</sup> Contrary to various Palestinian groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which wished to make the public aware of their objectives and demands with the use of spectacular airplane hijackings.

<sup>29</sup> A. Witkowska, *Media w globalnym świecie*, <http://www3.uj.edu.pl> (accessed: 27.10.2014).

<sup>30</sup> I. Wallerstein, *Świat bez hegemonu. Historia zmierzchu amerykańskiej potęgi*, „Europa” 2006, No. 41, pp. 8–9; cf.: *Propaganda: informacja, dezinformacja, chaos*, <http://www.lepszyswiat.home.pl> (accessed: 27.10.2014).

<sup>31</sup> S. Wojciechowski, R. Fiedler, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne współczesnego świata*, Warszawa 2009, p. 148.

prise guerrilla operations and terrorism.<sup>32</sup> As a rule, equal adversaries mutually acknowledged their equality and this mutual recognition provided the basis of their political rationality which led either to arms race or to agreements on arms limitation or even on partial disarmament. International law of armed conflicts, still applicable today, was based on the mentioned acknowledgement. However, these conditions no longer exist today. The asymmetry, defined so with the use of military dominance is the organisation, as well as manner of action and thinking different from the opponent's, aiming at maximising the own assets and taking advantage of the adversary's weakness in order to take initiative. The most significant thing is avoiding direct confrontation with the opponent superior to us. Any kind of action involving the armed forces or organised armed groups is an armed conflict. The response to the asymmetry understood this way is the strategy of symmetrisation, and its realisation are guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Nowadays, the asymmetrisation of warfare through the relocation of the combat zone, redefining the means of warfare and exploiting the new resources is the effect of the emergence of asymmetry in the world politics, as a result of the economic, technological and military superiority of the United States (as well as domination in the sphere of mass culture). None of the states and not even a coalition of states would be able to stand up to a military confrontation with the United States – starting from air force and carriers, through satellite intelligence and laser-guided bombs, to nuclear weapons and missile systems. The asymmetries that emerged in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were by no means limited to military strategies, but they influenced the political irrationality and international law legitimising war and preparations for it. In conditions of symmetric warfare, shaping the countenance of modern-age Europe, the rationality of independent rulers and their executive authorities was defined by symmetry. The deployment of troops, forming alliances as well as any means serving preparation to or preventing future wars all took into

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<sup>32</sup> J.D. Kiras, *Wojna nieregularna: terroryzm i działania partyzanckie*, in: J. Baylis, J. Wirtz, C.S. Gray, E. Cohen, (eds.) *Strategia we współczesnym świecie. Wprowadzenie do studiów strategicznych*, Kraków 2009, p. 197.

account the strength of the actual or potential opponent. Since the type of weaponry of both parties was similar, one could calculate the state of balance by comparing the number of soldiers and weapons, and, if necessary, achieve a balanced arrangement by appropriate armament. The asymmetry of political rationality reaches higher level in the asymmetry of legitimation based on the international law. In Europe consisting of independent states, equality has prevailed since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which meant that any power acknowledged as independent had the right to declare war (*ius ad bellum*). Today, it is not possible any more. Those who claim the right to conducting a just war in the contemporary world, assumes a priori the asymmetric legal situation of both parties. This is why the guerrilla activity has long fitted in the understanding of asymmetry. One of the parties has the whole law on its side, while the other has all the lawlessness. It is perceived as a criminal who ought to be inactivated, even with the use of preventive action. Each of the parties of an asymmetric conflict is seen by their adversary as an incarnation of evil which should be destroyed and eradicated. We deal with asymmetrisation, that is the clash of fundamentally dissimilar military and political strategies which, despite all the intensified efforts, especially taken recently, do not allow being regulated with the use of international law.<sup>33</sup>

Guerrilla activity cannot be understood as terrorist one. However, it must be undertaken as asymmetric activity. It generally strikes the society, and more exactly the general public. The task of asymmetric actions is weakening of the will to fight and setting the attacked societies at loggerheads.<sup>34</sup> Defining such concepts as asymmetric methods, tactics and techniques, and also asymmetric threats is of key importance. However, even defining the asymmetric conflict itself, but also strategy or warfare and the manner of conducting it poses a problem. These terms are often identified with one another. In the Strategic Assessment <sup>35</sup>report, the term “asymmetric threat” is used interchangeably with “technique of action”

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<sup>33</sup> M. Madej, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne – „nowy” problem bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 80–83.

<sup>34</sup> S. Wojciechowski, R. Fiedler, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>35</sup> Published by the National Defense University in Washington in 1998.

which in turn was defined as a kind of foul play. In this form, it is to result from using the surprise factor in its operational and strategic dimensions, and also using weapons in an unplanned way. J. Pawłowski and P. Gawliczek define asymmetric threat in a very similar manner. According to them, these threats are recognised as organising, thinking and actions which are considerably different from the actions of the opponent; also, making use of the discrepancies in the widely understood potentials.<sup>36</sup> Asymmetric warfare cannot be compared to a knightly duel which takes place according to specified rules. The only and most important rule is following no rules (the idea of guerrilla warfare). The essence of these actions is attracting the opponents into unknown areas, while their strength is to be utilised against themselves, and any weaknesses used as one's own asset.<sup>37</sup> H. Münkler derives his reasoning concerning military asymmetry from understanding symmetry. According to this author it is related to the political system shaped in modern times, pursuing this symmetry on three levels which mutually safeguarded themselves in achieving it. If asymmetry started to appear on one of the planes, other were able to take it over and balance it or to nip its development in the bud. The planes for the existence of asymmetry and the emergence of the danger of its disruption, i.e. the asymmetry according to Münkler are military strategy, political rationality and international legitimation. The level of military strategy is the one where the most interesting asymmetric forms of war emerge.<sup>38</sup> According to H. Münkler, the asymmetry, including the kind associated to guerrilla activity, results from the possibility of conducting armed warfare at a relatively low cost. In the guerrilla activities, clashes are scarce, and the large battles are hardly ever to be seen, which results from the asymmetry of the opponents' forces. The political and military determinants which in the early modern Europe caused the emergence of

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<sup>36</sup> Z. Ciekankowski, *Działania asymetryczne jako źródło zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 6–7.

<sup>37</sup> S. Koziej, *Wstęp do teorii i historii bezpieczeństwa*, an Internet textbook, Warszawa 2010, p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> An interstate war represents the highest form of symmetric warfare, institutionalised in a comprehensive manner by a form of symmetric warfare. For more, see: H. Münkler, *Wojny naszych czasów*, Kraków 2004, pp. 35–38.

the state-conducted warfare as dominant and later the only form of warfare, were shaped by symmetric relationships. This will not be found in the guerrilla activity. The military strength of the partisan side is by its nature “uncountable” and cannot be estimated. Hence, a classic asymmetric threat arises, and is frequently referred to. The asymmetrisation of the military actions thus implicates that the particular forms of using violence, so far comprising the second-rate tactical elements of the military strategy (in terms of state power), now gain a crucial strategic importance (for the non-state power).<sup>39</sup> The classic state war, leastways until the beginning of strategic bombings and dropping the first nuclear bomb, was conducted as a combat of both parties’ armed forces, subject to the rules of symmetry. On the other hand, guerrilla actions will never comply with them.

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<sup>39</sup> H. Münkler, *Wojny naszych czasów*, Kraków 2004, pp. 35–38.



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