The Militant Ideology as a Center of Gravity of the Religious Militant Organizations

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Abstract: *Latest developments suggest that we need to reevaluate the strategy for combating terrorism. To advise appropriate policies, one needs to identify the enemy's center of gravity. This paper argues that if we want to truly understand the threat from religious militant organizations, we need to identify the causes that generate such militant ideology. The problem with the modern terrorism is conceived in the 1980s, but the reasons that led to it have its roots decades earlier. Crucial part of the equation is the role of the Western democracies and their influences in the Muslim world. This paper proposes a cross examination of three historical periods with three possible explanations that feeds the militant ideology.*

Keywords: *West, Islam, extremism, militant ideology, terrorism*

Although one of the more complex threats to the national, regional and international security of the states in the last three decades is the terrorism conducted by religious (Islamic) extremists, its ideological basis is not sufficiently studied. (Tibi 2008, 2: 108) Recent terrorist attacks in Paris, France, showed that it has long been obvious that religious extremists will remain on the global stage and will continue to violate the security of the West.

'The war against terrorism' that Western democracies (hereinafter West) proclaimed two decades ago seems to take longer time and has fostered perception that it should be understood as a new World War. The West is determined to defeat terrorism because it directly threatens its values, democracy and way of life. The intent of this paper is to give an intellectual contribution in the fight against terrorism by detecting the crux of the matter. In the case of the militant Islamists as a current threat to the global security, this paper is looking at the reasons for their militant ideology. Clausewitz defined the center of gravity as a source of power, that gives strength or whose absence takes the strength, thus for success in war, it is necessary to protect its own center of gravity, and to destroy the opponent's. (FM 3.0. 2011; JP1-02. 2015:61) In this context, as the center of gravity of the Islamist terrorism, we identify its militant ideology.

First it is necessary to identify the key historical paradigms of Islam from conception to the 20th century that have strong influence on today's Western stereotypes and prejudice. Second, we have to properly define terminology, context and perception of concepts related to Islam. After this we are identifying the reasons that directly and indirectly contribute to the militancy of its ideology. This will be done through applying historical analysis divided into three periods: the interwar period, the Cold War period and the period after the Cold War. Furthermore, by applying the method of causation, we are explaining the impact of key events from every historical period on the three logical explanations, to understand the essence of the militant Islamists terrorism: if it is a conflict between progressive and traditional forces of Islam, a conflict between Sunnis and Shias or a conflict between Islam and the Western civilization.

At the end of the analysis through cross-comparative method for the three periods, we demonstrate whether the core of the militant ideology is one of three explanations, a combination of two or all three together. This will show if the key events are also the causes of militancy, or makers of the center of gravity of terrorism. To confirm that the key events really contribute to the emergence of the militant ideology, we use the terrorist attack in 2004 in Madrid, Spain as contemporary example. If they are repeated as pattern in other cases, they can be taken as decisive factors when planning a strategy to win against today's global threat.

1. THE KEY HISTORICAL PARADIGMS OF ISLAM FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE 20TH CENTURY

To understand the stereotypes and prejudices that the West has about Islam, it is necessary to make a brief description of its history. Islam began to spread across the Arabian Peninsula in 622. The reason that Islam found deep roots in the Arab world is the fact that before it appeared among Arabs, they were already influenced by Eastern culture. The Arab society was characterized by collective versus the individual value system, older more important than the younger, and the authority of the government and the elderly were respected unconditionally. Like most religions, Islam synchronized with this system because it required unreserved acceptance of the authority of the creator.

With the expansion of Islam the Caliphate was established. The prophet united the believers around his authority as a legislator, because before that, the political power on the Arabian Peninsula was divided on tribal basis. (Aslan, 2005, 58) So the biggest change that we still see today is the concept of 'Uma', a radical social change in order to unite all Muslims in a community or nation. It is an important feature of the Islamic law, necessary to understand its social power. If before, the only way of gaining membership was by birth of a person in a particular tribe, after introducing Islam, anyone could become a member of the Uma, if he or she accepts it. (Aslan, 2005, 58) The consistency of the concept of 'Uma' lies in the fact that Islam, more than other religions, breaks the barriers of ethnicity, culture and race. This is the reason why Islam is evocative to the minorities and marginalized groups; it became a tool to protect their identity.

The period of the Crusades is particularly important to understand the development of relations between the West and Islam. The image that Islam is a violent religion originated from Pope's propaganda that he used to motivate the Crusaders to go into war against Islam. (Aslan 2005, 79) The motive for the crusades was not to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, but securing the trade routes to the Far East. The causes of the Crusades were economic not religious, religion was merely a tool how to persuade and mobilize the masses to go to war. It is important to know that the term 'holy war' is actually not Muslim, but Christian concept that the Crusaders used to justify and legitimize the campaign with conquering nature. (Aslan, 2005, 80) Today it is misinterpreted that jihad is 'holy war,' another perception problem that contributes to misunderstanding the real threat. As a result of the Crusades, the Arabs entered into a period of regression, xenophobia and isolation while Western civilization began to thrive. (Maalouf 1984)

After the Crusades, the Ottomans took over the leadership and become a dominant Islamic power. This shift of the center of power in Islam left deep roots because the Ottoman Empire extended across the Arab World. After ages of reign, the Ottomans started to weak and withdraw from the Arab territories, so the European forces filled the gap and colonized the Arab lands. During the 19th century, a thought was developed in Europe that the superiority of the Western civilization derives directly from ancient Greece and its progress as a qualitative characteristic is inherited to Western culture. (Buzan and Lawson 2015: 98) Hence, there are several theories of Western domination, including the superiority of the Western way of warfare, making the European countries colonize the World relatively easy.

Many authors today portray Islam as a violent, warlike religion that was spread by the sword through conquest and wars. (Aslan, 2005, 78) These stereotypes are inscribed in the Western thought and do not contribute to really grasp the problem of militant Islamists. Instead, they give a wrong perception and thus impose a wrong strategy for their suppression. After all, every religion is a religion of the sword and it is not fair that today's authors pointing the finger at Islam as a violent religion disregard the violence perpetrated by the Western civilization through the ages. If we measure violence conducted in the name of the religion, one should take into account the consequences of the Europeans' actions like 'discovery' of the World, colonization, two World Wars and the Holocaust.

Also, we need to critically accept the fact that, contrary to the established perception in the West that the invaders forcibly imposed Islam on the occupied territories, it is not entirely true. (Aslan, 2005, 80) Islam became interesting as an economic and social advantage and mostly accepted voluntarily. On the other hand, at a time when Europe was in the period, called 'the dark ages', the Islamic laws enabled the Arabs great scientific and technological progress and they even became more developed compared to Europeans. The Feudal system of the Ottoman Empire was far better organized then the feudal systems in European countries.

We conclude that the stereotype that Islam was spread by the sword is not quite correct, as well as that is an aggressive religion that has provoked the Crusades, and that the Arab world and the Ottomans were backward and barbaric. This was done because the history is always shaped by politics. Critically speaking, all religions are spread by the sword and they are used as a political tool. The Crusades were wars of conquest of the West, the Arab world was more advanced than Europe and the Ottoman Empire was better organized and therefore existed relatively long. Any history is a military history and no religion can be completely amnestied from the responsibilities of perpetrating violence in a certain period.

2. ETYMOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE MILITANT ISLAM

The understanding of contemporary terrorism as a global threat still remains a challenge in the international relations because of the failure to reach a commonly accepted definition. There are many reasons for this, but primarily because states, especially the major powers, want to have their options open if they are involved in irregular warfare. But what is important in the fight against terrorism does not depend on its definition, but on the essence of its nature. Terrorism as an extreme form of violence mostly relies on the principles and tactics of guerrilla warfare.

This means that when designing suitable policies and strategies to combat terrorism, one should understand and take into account some of the general principles of guerrilla warfare. As a particularly important tactic that the terrorists use is to cause major damage with a small force in order to extort a disproportionate and indiscriminate response from the states in the wrong direction. This means frequent errors when fighting terrorists causing collateral damage and innocent victims. But even the greater damage that the terrorists deliberately provoke is to make the West deviate from its democratic and liberal values.

It seems that one of the goals of the militant Islamists is by spreading fear and threats in the western societies, to inflame prejudice, stereotypes, and hate speech against Islam as a whole. So far, they are successful because Islam in the West is more and more perceived as a problematic religion and the main source of modern terrorism. This is important to understand since one should not blame Islam as a religion because of the violence caused by approximately 0.003% militant Islamists. (Sciutto, Crawford and Carter 2014)

This is beneficial only for the terrorists because by inciting Islamophobia, mistrust between the West and the Muslim countries is created, which adversely affect cooperation. But the even worse counter effect of Islamophobia is the victimization in search for identity. This is a characteristic of the Islamic minorities in Western Europe, where this is exactly the reason for their isolation and drives them toward extremism and violence.

It is necessary to break the myth about some current stereotypes related to Islam, because the wrong terminology for certain terms is giving wrong context to the public opinion. For example, Bassam Tibi believes that the ideological base of global terrorism led by Islamists is not Islam itself, but the 'religionization of politics and a politicization of religion leading to a jihadization of Islam.' (Tibi 2008,2: 102) This means that the Western established term 'radical Islam' leads to misperception because the Islamists are getting radicalized, not Islam as a religion. Regardless of the adjective 'radical', the focus always falls on the noun that performs the action, and in this case it is 'Islam.' This is a proof that the wrong semantics can contribute to Islamophobia in the West.

In order not to take the right motive of the Islamist militancy out of context, it is necessary to properly define and present the concepts. In the world literature there are more terms appearing which are either interpreted or understood differently. As adjectives that describe the word 'Islam', we find terms as moderate, secular, traditional, fundamental, radical and militant. Related with the noun 'Islam' as derived nouns that perform the action, frequently used are: fundamentalist, Islamist,

extremist and militant. It is especially necessary to emphasize the terms 'jihad,' 'jihadism' and 'jihadist' which are particularly taken out of context not only in the West but also by the terrorists themselves.

The acceptance of Western values, not practicing strict customs and categorical rejection of extremism and terrorism is considered as Moderate Islam. However, few authors believe that the moderate Islam is open to change, (Tibi 2008,1: 197) because there is wider opinion that such thing is impossible and the term 'moderate Islam' is an oxymoron. (Ibrahim 2014) Islam is Islam and its doctrine is not open to free interpretation. What the West is called moderation, is actually just the absence of practicing Islam (indiscipline) because the essence of the Quran is eternal, unchanging and perfect. (Warner 2015) Moderate Islam is an extremely leftist concept, and though seen as a positive effort in the integration of Muslims in the West, it's actually perceived as pressure to them to renounce their beliefs. It is possible that such pressure for moderation is encouraging the Muslims to return to the roots and traditions. (Benton and Nielsen 2013)

On the other hand, secularism allows practicing all traditions and values of religion, but it does not interfere with the political system. This is also a paradox, because Islam itself is a political system and it cannot be excluded from the laws in the society. Only Republic of Turkey stands as a secular state, (Azak 2010) but even there the conservative nationalism began to denounce secularism, believing that Islam should not be excluded from the national identity and pride of the Turks. (Azak 2010: 175) The majority of Muslims accepts the basic concepts of Western democracy and has more or less accepted ideas such as constitutionalism, pluralism and human rights. (Aslan 2005: 258) But it is not accepted, and it is very difficult to accept, the Western model of secularism where religion is completely suppressed by the state. If the West insists on secularism as a condition for democracy, probably it will not find understanding among Muslim countries.

Traditional Islam is the most dominant form of interpretation of Islam. The majority of Muslims in the world and their governments pursue traditional Islam, which is considered as the true Islam. The traditionalists extract their values from the Islamic law of the Quran and organize their social and private life based on religion. (Nasr 1987:12-22) It is important to understand that the traditional Muslims do not always want to be identified as fundamental. Although both overlap to a large extent, because fundamentalism suggests moving toward the right, the traditionalists more openly distance themselves from those who call themselves fundamental. The West must not interpret this as permissiveness and leaning left toward moderation, because that causes the opposite effect.

The 'fundamental' or 'radical' Islam are terms that have become popular in the last three decades. Radicalism or fundamentalism is the literal interpretation of any religion. Generally the western governments identify the terrorists as Islamic fundamentalists (radical Islamists), but all fundamentalists are not necessarily terrorists. The fundamental Islam means returning to the roots, to strictly respect the Quran and practicing everything that is required of a Muslim. The reasons why sometimes the fundamentalists are shifting toward right are certain interpretations of the Quran that seems to require it.

The creator of the Islamic radicalism is Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), who began promoting Sharia law as a model for legislation in the Muslim countries. (Aslan 2005: 238) His ideology was radical because it advocated Islam to become a major pillar in editing state, which started to strengthen the idea of 'political Islam' or 'Islamism'. Islamists believe that Islam can answer any questions about people's social life, therefore it should be integrated into the legislation of the country, so people live exclusively according to the values and norms set out in the Quran. (Aslan 2005: 239) Motivated by imposing Sharia law, Islamists for opponents do not consider just Western countries, but also any attempt by governments in Muslim countries to impose secularism.

The moment the fundamental (radical) Islamists become violent, it is considered as militant or religious extremism. Because in practice they use the methods of terrorism, in the last three decades the West considers fundamentalism and radicalization of Islamists as an important part of the problem of terrorism. (Milton-Edwards 2005:92) This terminology is rooted in literature, media and everyday speech in a way that begins to affect the common man as everything that is related to the noun 'Islam' suddenly becomes a threat.

The most significant misinterpretation of a concept is the word 'jihad'. According to the Quran, jihad is an internal, personal struggle of the believer and not directed outwards. Some Western authors go

as far as to compare jihad as 'Mein Kampf' by Adolf Hitler. (Spencer 2005) But responsible for this are the militant Islamists who have started to use the word 'jihad' in warlike connotations. The doctrine of jihad in a military context dates back to the Crusades, when the Muslims militarized the word jihad in order to defend it, dividing the World on a House of Islam (where Islam reigns or *dar al-Islam*) and a House of War (where Islam does not reign or *dar al-Harb*). (Aslan 2005: 84) The militant jihadists consider themselves as true believers and consider all the other Muslims who do not adhere to the traditions and foundations as infidels or 'kafirun' who ought to be killed. (Tibi 2008.2: 102) Therefore, although Tibi believes that 'jihadist terrorism is a product of Islamism', (Tibi 2008,2: 106) stresses that it is particularly important for the West to realize that 'jihadism in the shape of terrorism is no longer the classical jihad of Islam, but the outcome of the politicization of religion in Islam'. (Tibi 2008,2: 123)

Since the creation of the Quran, in order not to lose meaning in translation or change any part of the original word of God, it is insisted to be recited exclusively in Arabic. This is a serious challenge for the moderate Muslims who are trying to be flexible in terms of traditional concepts and adaptable to the Western way of life. The fact is that it is very difficult to synchronize the traditional concept of the Sharia law with the Western democracy and its human rights.

If we draw a line on the road from peace to war, while in the far left lies moderate and secular Muslims, in the middle are traditional Muslims (the majority), on the right are fundamental (radical) Muslims that the West identify as potential for violence. These are the shades of the ratio of devotion to religion that intertwine and vary, but the center of gravity of modern terrorism is the militant ideology. Through critical analysis, we have to investigate why this shifting towards the far right is occurring.

3. ORIGIN AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVENTS, PHENOMENA AND EXPLANATIONS FOR MILITANT IDEOLOGY

During the interwar period, the most influential events used to explain the emergence of the militant ideology are:

- The end of the Caliphate and the foundation of modern, secular Turkey,

- The foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 in Cairo, Egypt.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of modern Turkey led by Kemal Ataturk, the Caliphate which symbolized the spiritual unity of the Muslims in the form of community 'Uma' for 14 centuries, ceased to exist. (Aslan 2005: 234) Republic of Turkey in the interwar period made a swift and radical step in a different direction: it became the first Muslim country to accept the Western concept of security and decisively, by law, break the paradigms of traditional Islam. From that moment, the Arab nationalists began to think about returning to the roots not only because of the disappearance of the Caliphate, but also because of the humiliation they suffered under the occupation of the European powers.

Today's terrorist ideology draws inspiration directly from the doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the beginning of the Islamic fundamentalism in the 20th century. The purpose of the brotherhood was 'an Islamic world revolution' and the formation of a new world order that is contrary to the secular, Western Westphalia system. (Tibi 2008,2: 104) The founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, made interpretation of classical jihad in a form what today's terrorists use, a jihad against the West. (Tibi 2008,2: 112) Islamist militants believe that jihad is a religious duty of every Muslim. The establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus the emergence of fundamentalism or Islamism, is the awakening of Islam as a result of resistance against colonial rule of the European countries. (Buzan and Lawson 2015: 44) The expansion of Western culture and values in the Arab World awakens the collective memory of the Muslims about the greatness of the Caliphate era when Islam was booming. The colonization of the West began to be perceived not only as an occupation, but a humiliation for Islam.

During the Cold War period, the most influential events used to explain the emergence of the militant ideology are:

- The foundation of the state of Israel and opening the Palestinian question,
- Four Arab - Israeli wars and the emergence of pan-Arabism,

- The Iranian revolution,

- Iran - Iraq war,

- The foundation of Hezbollah and the emergence of Shia extremism,

- Soviet intervention in Afghanistan,

- The emergence of al-Qaeda.

Immediately after the Second World War, a particularly important event that caused a chain reaction of many other events was the establishment of the state of Israel. Ignoring the opinions of the Arab countries were not only experienced as an insult, but opened the Palestinian question that is still ongoing security problem in the Middle East. The fact that the establishment of Israel was a Western project primarily supported by the US significantly shaped the disapproving views of the Arabs toward the West, who still wanted to be dominant over them after the colonization period.

In the period from 1948 to 1974, the establishment of Israel incited Arab nationalism and encouraged the idea of pan-Arabism. Especially the second Arab-Israeli war in 1956 contributed to an increased anti-Western sentiment, when the Israelis occupied the Sinai Peninsula, supported by France and the UK who have tried to establish control over the Suez Canal. The Arab world experienced this as a de facto aggression from the West. Due to the international pressure, France and UK have withdrawn, but the problem with Israel will lead to another two great wars, in 1967 and 1974. The significance of these wars is that the support that the West gave to Israel (political, economic and military, plus arming them with nuclear weapons), is still angering the Muslims today.

While the West was more concerned with the Arabs, Israel and the Palestinian question, in 1979 a new moment on the global scene appeared, the Islamic revolution in Shia's populated Iran. This event is particularly important because when tracing the beginnings of Islamist terrorism, it is evident that the militant form of Islamism originated in the Islamic revolution. The Ayatollah Khomeini was the first Muslim leader who identified jihad as a powerful tool. He openly advocated militant interpretation of Islam that was not only used as a driving rhetoric during the revolution, but in the war against Iraq that was actually conflicted between Shia's Iran and Sunni's controlled Iraq. (Aslan 2005: 86)

There is no accurate number of casualties in the Iraqi-Iranian war from 1980 to 1988, but it is estimated that certainly exceeds one million. This is important to understand first because it is a major conflict between Sunni and Shias and its effects on the relations between the two groups are still present. Second, it was a conflict in which the West (primarily the United States) continued to influence politically, economically and militarily in order to defend the oil interests in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The culmination of the presence of the US in the Persian Gulf was noticed on 3 July 1988 when the US Navy accidentally shot down Iranian passenger airplane (flight 655) with 290 passengers aboard. This incident significantly augmented the worsened relations with Iran after the failed operation to rescue the hostages in the US embassy in Tehran in 1980.

Iranian influence as a new actor in the region was mostly seen in the foundation of the Islamic militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s. It was an Iranian project, trained and organization to project the Shia's interests in the Middle East. In order to explain the roots of modern terrorism, it is important to understand this turn of events and cause - effect relationship of the Islamic revolution and the war with Sunni-led Iraq. Islamist terrorism and jihad as a concept emerged as a direct threat to the West in the 1980s when the Shia's militant organization (Islamic Jihad) started to carry out attacks using suicide bombers in Beirut, Lebanon. (Moghadam 2005: 3) From that moment the use of suicide bombers has become a trend of terrorism. On 18 April 1983 in a suicide attack on the US Embassy in Beirut, 63 people were killed, and on 23 October 1983 in a suicide attack on military facilities, 299 French and American soldiers, (Stephens 2012) which was the biggest loss of US Marines in one day after the Second World War.

While the Iranian lobby is the most responsible for encouraging militant jihad using terrorist tactics among Shia Muslims, the Saudis are responsible for encouraging terrorism among Sunni Muslims. Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, a professor of Islamic philosophy at King Abdulaziz University in the 1980s, promoted the idea of militant jihad which served as the basis for creation of the Sunni militant group Hamas. (Aslan 2005: 86) His most famous student was Osama bin Laden, who called for a global jihad against the West and is the creator of the attacks of 11 September 2001.

Simultaneously with all these events, in the 1980s another great event happened, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. This prompted the idea of a militant version of jihad and the emergence of 'mujahedeen' fighters. Among the most famous was Osama Bin Laden, who took an active part in the war against the USSR. The Muslims experienced the victory over the Soviet Union as a great victory for Islam against one of the two world powers. This is important to understand because in the mindset of the militant Islamists a new ambition was initiated, that similar success is possible over the other world power, the USA.

Proof of this is the foundation of al-Qaeda just before the end of the war in Afghanistan in 1988, (Mohamedou 2007: 51) with a mission to free the Muslim world from the foreign influences and restoring the Caliphate. (Musharbash 2005) With the foundation of al-Qaeda started what today many politicians call 'the war on terror'. Important for the analysis is the fact that al-Qaeda is a product of the failure of the Arab governments to defend from the Western influences and the disappointment of the Islamists in their inability to protect the interests of Islam. (Mohamedou 2007: 45)

During the period after the Cold War, the most influential events used to explain the emergence of the militant ideology are:

- The First Gulf war,
- Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Chechnya,
- Taliban in power in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda declaration of war,
- The Second Gulf war and the war in Afghanistan,
- The Arab spring,
- The emergence of ISIS and the Sunni extremism.

The first Gulf War in 1991 technically took place during the Cold War, which ended unofficially three days before the end of the Gulf War (with the abolition of the Warsaw Pact), and officially in December the same year (the dissolution of the USSR). The effects of the Gulf War in which 39 states have sided with the US in the war against Iraq were so great that the president Bush called the period that followed the 'new world order'. (Wolley and Peters 2015) A total of 12 Muslim countries and almost all Arab countries stood in defense of the sovereignty of Kuwait. Although the intervention of the coalition forces was justified and approved by the international community, the presence of Western troops in the heart of the Arab World symbolized reclaiming influence of the West in the Muslim affairs.

Although the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Chechnya were different in nature, in the end they were abused by religious extremism. They started as wars of liberation and nation building, but later received a religious character. The former mujahedeens from the war in Afghanistan joined as volunteers on the side of Islam, looking at these two wars as a chance to extend the global jihad. This is one of the key events in this period because after the wars these mujahedeens remained to live in the countries where they fought. They started to project fundamentalism and Islamism in the hitherto secular environments, which have become a problem even for the Muslims natives.

In 1996 the Taliban rises in power in Afghanistan turning it into a country that sponsors terrorism. Al-Qaeda found safe haven in Afghanistan and support from the Taliban government. From there, Bin Laden declared war on the United States twice, first on 23 August 1996, then two years later on 23 February 23 1998, with the announcement of the fatwa: 'to kill Americans and their allies, civilians and soldiers, is an individual duty of every Muslim ... until their armies do not leave the countries of Islam, defeated and disabled to threaten any Muslim.' (Mohamedou 2007: 51) The seriousness of al-Qaeda intentions was demonstrated with the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 and simultaneous attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya on 7 August 1998.

The most devastating attack al-Qaeda made on 11 September 2001, after which the United States were drawn into their 'long war.' First the US intervened in Afghanistan in order to destroy the Taliban government and al-Qaeda, and then again in 2003 in Iraq for taking Saddam Hussein out of power. Unlike the First Gulf War, which had a limited objective, the Second Gulf War was a classic occupation of Iraq. This time the US presence caused a significant disruption to the internal relations of Iraq. Saddam Hussein during his autocratic rule favored Sunnis and kept Shias and Kurds under control. In an attempt to bring democracy to the country, the centers of power shifted that caused widespread ethno-sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shias in March 2006.

The Arab Spring in 2011 was a cultural and social revolution that spread across the Arab world as a domino effect. It can be interpreted as the release of Arab frustration and anger from the West in the direction of their own governments, spurred by high unemployment and population growth which generated a range of social problems. The Arab revolt began with a small accidental spark, like all revolutions, when an event in Tunisia triggered demonstrations and violence that spread across several countries. Although it began about the civil rights, in many places extended into violence between Sunnis and Shias. This was again used by the West to project their policies and interests by giving support where they thought they should, generally in favor of the Sunnis. The consequences of the Arab Spring are great. The destabilization of Libya and Syria caused the migration of the Muslim population from North Africa and the Middle East toward Europe.

The emergence of Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (also known as ISIS, ISIL, IS or Daesh) is a culmination of militant Islamism until today and a synonym for the newest global threat. They are a manifestation of the Sunni extremism, as a consequence both of Shia's governed Syria and the increased role of the Shia Muslims in Iraq. On 29 June 2014 year ISIS declared a global Caliphate, (ABC / Reuters 2014) fulfilling the idea of the Muslim brotherhood set in 1928. For a very short time they expanded on a vast territory in Iraq and Syria, where currently 10 million people live. The crimes they started to perform in medieval style are the most brutal form of terrorism. Their goal is to expand the Caliphate worldwide. The last attacks in Paris are proof that ISIS has a capacity to terrorize Europe in the future. Their rise additionally contributes to an increased migration to Europe, which will have enormous consequences on demography, culture, politics, economy, and overall, the security of Europe.

Based on the above, we propose three logical explanations for the militancy through three periods or to describe what is happening with a small percentage of Islamists who choose the extreme way of warfare. First, it is a product of a conflict between traditional and progressive forces in the Islamic religion, something that Christianity had within until it got to the option of secularity today. Second, it is an inner religious conflict between the two main groups of Muslims, Sunni and Shia which began immediately after the death of the Prophet. And third, it's a continuation of the epic struggle between Western culture which is based on democracy, freedom and individualism and eastern culture based on autocracy, loyalty and tradition. To indicate which of these explanations is the most relevant in terms of identifying a center of gravity, it is necessary to determine how the key phenomena and events of the three periods encouraged these three explanations.

The conflict between traditional and progressive forces in Islam is already evident in the first period. Turkey was a successor of the Caliphate for centuries, and just in a decade went through huge internal reforms. Without any foreign influence from the outside Turkey transformed into a secular, modern state and accepted the Western standards, norms and values. A fight against the Sultan preceded this, so Turkey is the first example of a social and cultural revolution in Islam. On the other hand, the Arabs at that time were influenced by the West, and we can say that during the First World War they were actually played by 'Lawrence of Arabia' to fight with the Allies against the Ottomans. Arabs, orchestrated by the West, directly contributed to destroy the Caliphate. The birth of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology and the restoration of the Caliphate is a logical reaction to fill the gap that occurred due to the emergence of the 'progressive' Muslims.

During this period there was not any particular confrontation between Sunnis and Shias, or open animosity towards the West, although the establishment of brotherhood despite being encouraged by a revolt against the progressive Muslims, was largely directed towards the Western colonial powers which de facto were perceived as occupiers of the Muslim lands. The dominant relationship in the West influenced the anti-Western sentiment. (Milton-Edwards 2005: 23)

The second period was much more dynamic and differs significantly because the events and phenomena influenced all three forms of conflict. In this period Islamist terrorism appeared. Especially the 1980s are particularly important for the analysis because it is the decade that marked the birth of the contemporary terrorism, worsening relations between some Muslim countries and the West and hostility between Sunnis and Shias. In this decade Hezbollah and al-Qaeda were established as well as the concept of global jihad.

The conflict between the traditional and the progressive forces can be seen in the acceptance of 'Western ways' on the behalf of the political elites in the Arab countries. After the end of the colonial rule, the elites still tried to maintain the level of Western culture that was already accepted.

Technology and media contributed the western way of life to be projected to the East. The most important counter-reaction to this was the Iranian Islamic revolution of the Ayatollah Khomeini, with the outright rejection of Western ways and returning to the roots of Islam. It is interesting to notice that this radical move was first made by Shias, not the Arabs (mostly Sunnis).

The establishment of an Islamic state of Iran prompted the Shia extremism, which manifested itself in two directions: against the Sunnis, leading to war against neighboring Iraq, and against the West, with the conceiving, training, equipping and encouraging Hezbollah to fight for Shia interests in Lebanon. The evidence of the extremes of Sunni-Shia conflict is the use of chemical weapons in Iraqi - Iranian war. The Hezbollah's Shia extremism is the beginning of the modern Islamic terrorism, with all forms of violence, in particular introducing the suicide bombers to the World. This directly contributed to the awakening of Sunni extremism and follows the trend of terrorist tactics that showed effects in Beirut.

Unlike the first period, during the Cold War there are already several examples of open confrontation with the West. The establishment of Israel as a state was 'a finger in the eye' for Muslims, which opened the Palestinian question as one of the biggest security issues in the 20th century. Algeria's war for independence from France is particularly interesting because of the first methods of urban terrorism in a war. But especially the Suez War in 1956 had a huge impact on mistrust toward the West, when Western powers made de facto aggression against Egypt. Also, any conflict with Israel was actually conflict with the West, because the state of Israel culturally represented Western and its projection in the Middle East. At the end of this period the US Navy boosted its presence in the Persian Gulf to protect the US ally Saudi Arabia in case of escalation of Iraqi - Iranian war. Although the USSR was not considered as West, its defeat in Afghanistan meant a demonstration of the mujahedeen that the militant Islamist ideology can win over western technology.

In the third period the combination of all three types of conflict continues. The globalization imposed technology, progress and the Western values, because it comes from there. Especially technology contributes the West to project 'soft power' and to impose its cultural values and trends. During this period the conflict between traditional and progressive Muslims occurs not only in the Islamic world, but also in the West, with an appearance of moderate and secular Muslims. This is partly due to accommodation of Western civilization, and its response to Islam with stereotypes of a violent religion. Defending Islam, some authors encourage practicing the 'European Islam', (Tibi 2008,1: 153) a moderate and peaceful, advocating that Islam is a religion of peace. The Arab spring proves that Islam has internal inconsistencies and undergoes its awakening from traditional views. At the same time there is a trend of fundamentalism in parts of Western Europe as a defense mechanism of the non-integrated Muslim minority. The most dominant form of conflict between traditional and progressive forces is seen in the appearance of ISIS and the resistance of the Muslim governments against it. The majority of Muslims in the Islamic world does not give support and sympathies of ISIS. Although secularity is not correlated with Islam and even Turkey began to deviate from it, the Muslim governments are decisively against backsliding that ISIS imposes. Distancing from them means rejecting their militant ideology and the fight against them is a fight against terrorism.

After the Iraqi - Iranian war there was a period of truce between Sunnis and Shias, partially because during the regime of Saddam Hussein both countries gained a common enemy, the USA. But after the overthrow of Saddam and enforcing separation of power among the Kurds, Sunnis and Shias in Iraq, in March 2006 a bloody war between Sunnis and Shias started where Iran openly supported the Shias in Iraq. The strengthening of authority of Shia Muslims in Iraq is one of the causes of ISIS as Sunni extremism. Their first target was the Kurds and Shias, which they do not consider Muslims. In essence, the civil war in Syria is a revolt of more Sunni groups who are the majority (74%) against President Assad and the ruling elite who is Shia (13%). Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey support the Sunni rebels in Syria. Civil war in Yemen is also a conflict between Sunnis and Shias, where Saudi Arabia and other Arab states intervene and help the Sunnis, while Iran is helping the Shias.

The conflict between Islam and the West in this time period should be carefully analysed. In the First Gulf War a sufficient number of Arab countries supported the United States. The war effort it was to protect Kuwait, so no one can claim that the war was against Islam. In the case of Afghanistan, the intervention was against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. However, the second Gulf War, although for other reasons, was not supported by the international community, even not from Germany and France. This opened questions to Islam and was perceived as an unnecessary Western presence in the Middle East.

The problem is that both wars have dragged enough to arouse emotions in the Muslim World and anti-Western sentiment. The US attempt to discreetly withdraw from Iraq failed because ISIS appeared. Today the Western powers are involved in the war against ISIS (Sunni extremism), at the same time politically are against Assad in Syria (Shia) because traditionally the West sides with the Sunnis. In any case, ISIS is a consequence of disrupted relations between Sunnis and Shias, which means first it is a war between Islam, and then against the West as a secondary objective.

4. THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN MADRID IN 2004 AS EXAMPLE

On 11 March 2004 in the terrorist attack in Madrid, Spain, 191 people were killed and 2,000 injured. Total of 13 bombs were placed in four trains full with passengers moving on the same railway in Madrid, 10 of which exploded almost simultaneously, within a time period of one minute. It was the deadliest terrorist attack on European soil after the bombing of the Lockerbie airliner in 1988. The attack was conducted three days before the parliamentary elections in Spain. Although the winner of the election and the new Prime Minister Zapatero had previously opposed the Spanish participation in Operation 'Iraqi Freedom', the attacks in Madrid contributed to the withdrawal of Spanish troops from the coalition in April 2004.

Within a few days after the terrorist attack, a thorough investigation was conducted and more suspects were arrested. In Legan, south of Madrid, five suspects committed suicide with explosives refusing to surrender to the police, among them probably the leader of the group, Sharan Ben Abdelmadzhid torch. (Goodman 2004) The explosive found was of the same origin as that used on the station. It was estimated that the terrorists obtained and used about 200 kg of explosives. During the investigation, more than 70 suspects were arrested, of whom 20 were detained, most of them Muslims from Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Syria and Lebanon. (BBC News 2005) Three years later, a total of 21 terrorists were convicted for helping, organizing and carrying out the terrorist attack. (The Guardian 2007,2)

It is especially important for the analysis that the Spanish judiciary failed to find any direct link between the Madrid terrorist group and al-Qaeda, (The Guardian 2007,1) though the spokesman of al-Qaeda in Europe accepted the responsibility three days after the attack. (BBC News 2004) The investigation showed that the group was only motivated by the ideology of al-Qaeda. There was no evidence of transfer of funds or phone calls which would mean that the operation was planned from the outside. (USA Today 2006) The conclusion is that the terrorist attack in Madrid was the work of an internal (domestic) terrorism, executed by the group as an independent actor that decided to follow the trend of the militant ideology of al-Qaeda.

The fact that this was a splinter group of Islamists from several Arab countries and citizens of Spain from Arab origin, which were not directly linked to al-Qaeda or any other organization, makes this as an example and proof that the militant ideology of these religious extremists is responsible for their action. The attack in Madrid not only shows that militant ideology is transnational, but can appear anywhere unexpectedly. This example can confirm the thesis of this paper since Spain as a country fits the profile to explain the terrorism of the religious extremists as a conflict against the West.

Spain is a Western democracy, a member of the European Union and NATO. In the Operation 'Iraqi Freedom' Spain supported the US with 1300 troops, making it on the list of potential countries for a terrorist attacks. What makes Spain particularly interesting for the militant Islamists is its military history with Islam. Spain is perceived as a traditional opponent of the Caliphate and responsible for the suppression of Islam in Western Europe. After 781 years of conflict (from 711 to 1492), the Spanish suppressed the Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula, which also marked the beginning of Spain's expansion and transformation into a global, colonial power.

The centuries long presence of Islam in the peninsula, the Protectorate of Morocco (from 1912 to 1956) and the migration from the North African coast, contributed for Spain to have today about 1.7 million Muslims. The technology today allows militant ideology to spread at lightning speed, and in this case the target groups of transnational terrorism were the Arabs and Spaniards of Arab origin who were already integrated into society. This is also the latest threat of terrorism, a 'domestic terrorism' which is difficult to predict because the potential perpetrators are the citizens of the state who are second or third generation migrants.

The group was inspired from the announcement of a website linked to al-Qaeda that called for 'two or three attacks to exploit the coming general elections in Spain to ensure the victory of the Socialist party and the withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq'. (The Guardian 2007,1) This is an explicit

motive of the current policy of Spain in relation to the war in Iraq, but it can be assumed and other implicit motive. For many Islamic fundamentalists Spaniards are occupiers of Muslim countries - 'al-Andalus'. (The Guardian 2007,1)

The consequences of the terrorist attack in Madrid were huge. Even if the withdrawal of the Spanish forces from the coalition was previously planned, and the Spaniards generally opposed the participation in the Iraq war, the effect of immediate withdrawal was seen as a withdrawal in the West and victory of terrorism. But Madrid also showed that an independent group of Islamists may accept the militant ideology on the distance, without direct communication and assistance. They organized, planned and conducted the attack alone. The Militant Islamists are present in Europe, and the character of the Madrid bombing was an alarm that it is very difficult to predict ideologically motivated terrorism. This was confirmed as well in the London attacks in 2006 and Paris in 2015. If independent actors can relatively easily and quickly organize, then the danger of sleeping cells may be even greater.

5. CONCLUSION

In international relations, the responsibility of the consequences in geopolitics from the colonialism of the West seems to be forgotten after the Second World War. (Buzan and Lawson 2015: 53) They were identified with fascism and Western countries quietly distanced themselves from the guilt for their colonial rule as something that was so long ago, that today's does not matter. There is logic that terrorism is a consequence from the aggression of the West, especially the United States during the Cold War, in an attempt to control the governments of Arab countries. Although independent and sovereign, they still treated them as puppets of the Western policies. This aspect must not be forgotten because with its acceptance, perhaps lies part of the solution on how to approach the problem of radicalization. The international relations that are western centric and a product of two centuries of global inequality, now slowly started to pay the price. (Buzan and Lawson 2015: 63)

Michio Kaku says that the Western civilization imposed a trend that the world needs to move towards a multicultural, tolerant society and science, while terrorists or religious extremists want to return the World backwards. They are against multiculturalism, tolerance and science. Their goal is to impose theocracy versus secular society, or monoculture with their set of values, norms and standards. (Kaku 2011) But if something should be learned from the last three decades of war against terrorism, it is the idea that the violent jihad must be attacked simultaneously in a joint effort between Western and Muslim governments, and to break the stereotype that the war against terrorism is a war against Islam. (Tibi 2008,2: 103) One of the objectives of the terrorists is just that, a classic guerrilla doctrine to frame the opponent, in this case the West, to see all Muslims as enemies.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that what is happening today in the World in terms of the global threat from terrorism imposed by Islamic extremists will one day be seen as a turning point in world history. In which direction it will take place depends both on the policy makers in the West and the Muslim governments. The militant ideology tends to disrupt these relationships and to project the anger of a small percentage of Muslims as a Huntington's clash of civilizations. The problem is that terrorism as a method has devastating consequences and tends to succeed, because Europe has already begun to limit its own freedom at the expense of safety.

The terrorism imposed by Islamic extremists is 'ideological terrorism,' it has an ideological dimension that the West ignores. (Tibi 2008,2: 104) It is therefore necessary to act ideologically, to project the idea of non-violent Islam, which would be a combination of Western and Islamic joint effort. The western system should be portrayed as non-threatening to the existence of Islam and not an attempt for cultural dominance.

Not only is it obvious that the militant ideology of the religious extremism is the center of gravity of the enemy, but from this analysis, it is obvious which key events and phenomena caused all of this. Because the world is open, complex system that no one can predict and control, even if a stand is made to exclude certain variables that trigger militancy, terrorism will appear anyway.

The Western withdrawal from the problem as some have suggested can only encourage the terrorists. Therefore, it is necessary to treat the disease and not the symptoms. The fact that the West did certain actions that contributed to the militancy of the Islamists cannot be undone. But if the militant ideology is what encourages terrorism, that should be a center of gravity and attacked. The challenge is that this will have to be done by traditional Islam, or the governments of the majority of the Muslim countries.

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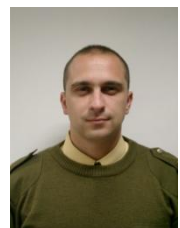
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