

New International Relations and the Proactive Anti-Terrorist Policy*

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The global struggle against terrorism is currently most important world issue. The world, including the Islamic and Arab states reacted to the terrorist challenge in a global fashion. The international community is already contemplating beyond the current military phase of the anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan. The present coherency within the international community is the highest since the World War II, joining earlier rivals in a common effort against the common enemy.

The Anti-Terrorist Coalition has proven to be an agent and a vehicle of significant changes in the international community. The changed international situation also brings a possibility of a new international consensus regarding the resolution of the Middle Eastern crisis. Croatia took a place side by side with all democratic and peace-loving countries in the international struggle against terrorism. Croatia will continue to contribute fully to the stability and co-operation in Europe, supporting the anti-terrorist effort on the national, regional, and international levels.

Keywords: terrorism, international community, international security, anti-terrorist policy

1. Introduction

The brutal terrorist attacks against the United States were an affront to the civilised world and to the values of democracy, freedom and human rights. The challenge could not go unanswered. September 11 was, indeed, a decisive turning point in combating terrorism, and, yet, it has the potential to go down in history as the point of a new beginning in international relations.

The world has reacted to the terrorist challenge on global scale and in a multi-faceted fashion. It has reacted at the level of the UN, especially through the adoption of Resolution 1373 which defines a political obligation, strengthens the relevant international standards and contains a programme of international and national activities against terrorists. It has also spoken up at the level of regional organisations. Thus NATO invoked the provisions of Arti-

cle Five of the Washington Treaty and the Latin American countries the Rio Treaty or the respective collective defence clauses. Also invoked were the same provisions of the Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand and the USA. The whole international community, including the Islamic and Arab states, have condemned the terrorist attack. Virtually all states are involved, in many ways, in the current anti-terrorist effort. The multitude of voices heard on the international scene has a number of common denominators: the culprits have to be brought before justice; the criminal symbiosis of the Taliban and the Bin Laden's al-Qaida, which masterminded the attack, has to be uprooted, Afghanistan should return to peace within itself and with its region. Generally, the threat of international terrorism to peace and security in the world has to be contained and ultimately eradicated. At the same time, international problems that serve as a breeding ground for terrorists have to be alleviated and resolved. That is a shortlist of the decisions made and

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the activities undertaken by the international community since September 11.

As the events in and around Afghanistan are in the limelight of world media, the international community is already contemplating actions going beyond the current military phase of anti-terrorist operations. There is a strong international consensus that the people of Afghanistan should form a broad-based multi-ethnic government representative of the whole Afghan community. There is a common will expressed by the international community to help Afghanistan's recovery, internal stabilisation and development, after decades of factional war, as well as mismanagement by the previous authorities.

2. The Relevance of Anti-Terrorist Coalition

The Anti-Terrorist Coalition formed in the wake of the September 11 attack has yielded unprecedented results, such as would have been hard to expect only a month ago. The Coalition is practically world encompassing. Earlier rivals and even foes have now joined hands in the common effort against the common enemy. Never since World War II has the world seen such a wide and coherent international concerted effort, with all the big powers taking part without exception.

Around the globe the international community is witnessing an extensive exchange of security-related information, and the introduction of wide-ranging measures aimed at upgrading internal security, stamping out the suspected financial holdings, as well as other policies directed against terrorist organisations and their networks.

All these activities within the Anti-Terrorist Coalition show that the struggle against international terrorism is setting up a new demarcation line. It also proves that the whole international community views terrorism as an extremely complex and elusive phenomenon which requires the mobilisation of all available resources – diplomatic, political, financial, legislative, judicial, police and so on. There is clear awareness that this relentless international effort will take a long time.

The immediate results of the Coalition may well be summarised as follows: the Taliban regime has become internationally completely isolated and faces sanctions together with the al-Qu'ida leadership. Their plans to trigger off a "conflict of civilisations" has miserably failed. The Arab and Islamic countries, although they have voiced some of their specific concerns, are fully involved in the anti-terrorist effort.

Dedicating more attention, resources and efforts at national, regional and international levels to combating the international organised crime is another important aspect of the international fight against terror. Like the terrorists, the international organised crime, wherever it takes hold, eats into, corrupts and endangers the society. Organised crime – through its practices of illegal migration, arms and drugs smuggling, the abhorrent trade in human beings – provides the groundwork and environment on which international terrorism is thriving. The fate of Afghanistan provides ample evidence of it: the cancer of its drug production and illicit trade has spread to many countries on the illegal drug trail, including Croatia.

3. Changing International Relations

From a wider angle, the Anti-Terrorist Coalition has proven to be an agent and a vehicle of significant changes in the international community. After September 11, many important events have occurred: for the first time the collective defence clauses were invoked, the first visit of a Russian President to NATO-headquarters took place; the first foreign visit of the US President G.W Bush was paid to China for an APEC summit; after a long time the first visit of a British Foreign Minister to Iran was arranged.

There is now a realistic hope that the nuclear stockpiles could be reduced significantly, and that the differences over the ABM Treaty and the National Missile Defence between the United States and the Russian Federation could be resolved. In the US-Chinese relations there is a new important community of interest, a "new constructive and co-operative relationship". There is talk of a new relationship being established between the US, EU and NATO and the Russian Federation, finally abandoning the notions of mutual lack of trust and rivalry. The EU and NATO expansion has been given a new boost, and is increasingly viewed as an expansion of the area of stability and security in Europe. The EU integrative processes are further strengthened. Most member States show an interest in consolidating and further developing the common foreign and security policy, as well as the EU's defence aspects. The same is true of the promotion of co-operation within justice and home affairs, particularly in the asylum and immigration policies. The neutral countries are discussing their different concepts of neutrality, having in view the European integrative processes and the need for ever stronger international security and de-

fence co-operation in facing the asymmetrical and non-conventional security threats. Similarly, Japan had to redefine the use of its forces in peace operations, permitting their deployment in logistic and other non-armed operations abroad. Obviously, in an adequate manner, all countries have to reconsider their concepts of national defence and security in today's increasingly interdependent world. There is a growing hope in furthering the stability and improving relations in the sensitive areas of Central and South Asia, since all the countries in the region, and all major world powers are effectively co-operating within the Anti-Terrorist Coalition.

The events following September 11 have reasserted the great importance of the UN in international relations as the best framework and the soundest base for dealing with the problems that the world is faced with. Hopefully, the new international atmosphere will soon be translated into a greater community of interest conducive to further progress in the reform of the United Nations' system.

What must also be underlined is the emerging international consensus on the Middle East crisis. For the first time all big powers are openly in favour of an independent Palestinian state, which would live side by side in peace with Israel. The Middle East parties - Israelis and Palestinians - ought to return to the negotiating table and hammer out a compromise that would satisfy the legitimate rights and aspirations of their peoples. It goes without saying that peace in the Middle East would greatly help stability not only in that part of the world but the whole international community.

4. The Role of Croatia

The September 11 tragedy has left thousands of people dead and injured, mostly Americans, but also nationals from some eighty countries, including Croatia. The very ruthlessness of the attack is a cause for serious reflection. Obviously, the terrorists won't stop of anything to endanger the innocent. Therefore, we have to redouble our efforts and take special care and, wherever possible, practice international monitoring of dangerous substances, biological, chemical and nuclear, and weapons of mass destruction.

In the economic field, it can be concluded that the measures taken, including the bringing down of the rates of the Federal Reserve in the US and the European Central Bank to record low levels, have helped alleviate more difficult problems. But the slowdown is still present in the world economy and a possible recession has not been definitely averted.

The return of the world economy to higher growth rates is now forecast for later than expected, probably the second half of the next year. Major economies serve as generators of the world economic growth, but also that the international community has, in our common interest, to pay more attention and allot more resources to alleviate the troubles of the developing countries. The reason is as clear as it can be. Poverty combined with the collapse of government, as the case of Afghanistan has shown, is likely to be a dangerous breeding ground for terrorists.

Practically from that day onwards, as the statements by Croatian Government, President and Prime Minister made quite clear, Croatia sided with all other democratic and peace-loving countries in the international struggle against terrorism. The Croatian Government has shown its strong solidarity with the United States and welcomed the actions taken by the Anti-Terrorist Coalition, particularly the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1373.

The actions taken by Croatia include: strengthening of border controls; tightening of air transport security; increased security measures to protect the embassies of the US and its allies, as well as the Muslim and Jewish community centres; intensified exchange of intelligence with the US and other countries; precautionary measures against possible money laundering and any suspect financial; decisions made following the imposition of UN sanctions against the Taliban regime; additional decisions made for the protection of public health, and a lot more. The resulting investigation has not established the existence of any international terrorist networks in Croatia. Acting in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 1373, the Government has requested all relevant authorities to further elaborate appropriate measures for combating international terrorism. Croatia has also continued her accession to UN and Council of Europe conventions on the fight against terrorism. She is keen to apply, as soon as possible, all the provisions of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (Article 80) and to enhance co-operation with the EU in Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well in the Justice and Home Affairs. Activities are also under way within the regional fora, particularly the Stability Pact, aimed to enhance co-operation with the neighbouring countries in the anti-terrorist campaign. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has played an important part in the overall Government activities.

Croatia will continue to fully contribute to the stability and co-operation in Europe and strongly supports the extension and intensification of the integrative processes in Europe, and the strengthening

of co-operation within the EU and NATO. The threat of terrorism, which knows of no borders, has shown the extent of interdependence in the security of all European states. Terrorism, like many other European problems, instead of divisions, requires a common European response – the creation of a truly all-European Area of Security and Justice. An area of democracy, tolerance, security and development shared by all European countries.

As a democratic country on the way towards the EU and NATO membership, Croatia will actively contribute to the anti-terrorist effort at national, regional and international levels. Croatian people are confident that the scourge of terrorism, which poses a direct threat to international peace and stability, will be effectively eradicated. This victory is important for all nations and for every individual. ■



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