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TERRORIST ATTACKS VERSUS ACTS OF ILLEGAL INTERFERENCE IN CIVIL AVIATION. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF AIRPORT CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Why aviation terrorism?

Hijackings, assaults and attacks on means of transport had existed long before the invention of the airplane. In past centuries, criminal acts were mainly robbing mail-coaches or pirate attacks on trade ships. The practice of keeping hostages for ransom, however, has survived from ancient times up to the present day. Kidnappings and keeping hostages favoured the achievement of economical, strategic and tactical goals. The aims of hijackings and attacks were both obtaining money for further criminal activities, as well as an expression of protest against government policy or for the creation of a terror atmosphere in order to publicise the case, and thus influence politics. It is worth mentioning, while the media maintain the presence of the Islamic terrorist wave, that the founder of Islam – Muhammad the Prophet, conducted attacks on caravans of camels. The motivation of criminals is changeable and non-heterogeneous, and has been the object of various repercussions, preventative measures and applied security systems.

What makes the attacks on aviation transport so attractive is the fact that the act of aggression aimed at means of transport has an impact not only on the craft and vehicles themselves, but also on the critical infrastructure, the passengers, the crew and is followed by the wide interest of media due to the spectacular side of the event. The causes in the direct sense affect the financial and psychological aspect. The indirect sense of the event is the political, economical, legal and organisational aspect. It should be noticed, however, that the division of the causes is conventional and the boundary between them is unstable. Let us then take a closer look at them.

The financial results are all the damages caused by the conducted terrorist attack, particularly the destroyed or damaged aircraft, airport buildings, the agencies and offices of airlines, as well as the buildings of the aviation industry. The most severe and the most dangerous in their results are the attacks which lead to the destruction of aircraft, particularly during a flight. They cause significant number of fatalities and financial loss. The consequence of the blowing up of a plane near Lockerbie was, in fact, the bankruptcy of PANAM airlines.

Terrorist acts cause psychological shock for people who are in the direct surrounding and such psychological results are in fact social results. The shock is transferred onto the families of the casualties or the hostages. The attack itself or even the possibility of its appearance may cause anxiousness in a given region, social group, and in ex-
treme cases may cause panic. One should remember that modern man is less resistant to such stresses and terrorist acts escalate the feeling of being in danger and anxiety levels. They generate the self-limitation of the freedom of citizens which is related to, for example, fear of using airlines or avoiding airports. Such behaviour based on avoidance was observed after 11 September 2001 in reference to people of Arab origin.

What is more, the social circumstances impose the introduction of many organisational undertakings. Such actions are, for example, limiting social liberties, such as right to secret and freedom of correspondence, limitation of the freedom and control of the migration of citizens. After 11 September 2001 the United States, as well as other countries which followed, took actions which resulted in bigger surveillance of society coined in the name of fight with terrorism.

The legal results are mentioned above. They refer to the changes in the existing legal documents which sanction the approved organisational solutions. They give the civil services and special services the right to extraordinary action.

In a global approach, the most noticeable among the effects for the organisation of the country and for the public order are the political results. They include, first and foremost, the reduction of the prestige of the country in the arena of international politics and it may lead to the collapse of the social and political system and force decisions and political solutions convenient for the terrorists – vide: the retreat of the Spanish army from Iraq after the terrorist attack on the rail system in Madrid.

The outcome of all the effects mentioned above are the economical results which have, almost always, a huge impact on the economy of the country.

The attempt to answer the initial question of this paper causes a problem, from the very beginning, with the definition of aviation terrorism, and a range of actions included in this term, as the hijackings, damages and assaults etc., and causes chaos in terms of classification of the acts. It is thus necessary to draw certain distinctions.

**DISAGREEMENT CONCERNING THE DEFINITION – TERRORISM AS A METAPHOR**

Terrorism has various ideological motivations and is a planned and organised action of an individual or a group of people. The aim of such action is the violation of the existing legal order, the extortion of certain actions and benefits from the government and the society. Such acts very often cause the infringement on the rights of outsiders. The worst aspect of terrorist acts is the fact that it is performed with all possible ruthlessness and with the use of various means. Such acts often include the intimidation of the public opinion in order to convince the citizens to the ineffectiveness and helplessness of the machinery of the state, and to make sure the given case is widely recognised by the public. The term terrorism comes from the Latin word terror which means fear and horror. The definition of terrorism presented above concerns mainly the terrorism referred to as political, because the present acts of terror are mainly directed towards reaching the political aims pointing at the same time at the psychological aspects, because, as it

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has already been mentioned, the main aim of terrorism is to cause fear in the target group. If a religious element is added, which refers to a terrorist act performed by religious extremists, the motivation then is the professed religion or the assaults which are performed in the name of God – such terrorism can be called religious terrorism. In practice, however, it is difficult to categorise a given act of terror as only political or only religious. The typology here is wide and points at a range of factors, which should be taken into account. The problems with the definition of terrorism exist because of its continuous evolution. In the “Encyclopaedia of terrorism” one can find a suggestion that on approaching a discussion over terrorism the approach of the discussion members to terrorist acts should be taken into account.

There are four main groups distinguished by the encyclopaedia, each of which refers differently to terrorism:

- scientists, who try to have a totally objective approach to terrorism. In an ideal situation the universities form an intellectual forum, in which the scientists may discuss terrorism not being attacked by the terrorists or suspected of sympathising with the terrorists;
- members of the authorities are often victims of terrorist attacks, contrary to the first group. Their official statements concerning terrorism are presented by public relations officers, the opinion of whom is influenced by the awareness that the people they represent are involved in fighting terrorism;
- society may quite radically change their attitude to terrorism, depending on the development of actions. In democratic societies the opinions are presented by the media but they are also created by the media;
- the attitudes of terrorists and their supporters present the point of view of people who think that they are groundlessly oppressed by the government.

Almost in every case the attitude of the first three groups to terrorism will be common and will negatively comment on the fourth group. Taking such case into consideration one should consider if one combats terrorism or the terrorists.

The ambiguity of the application of that term gives a wide range of interpretation and qualification possibilities and at the same time makes abuses and realisation of private businesses possible. It is commonly known that the term “terrorist” used in reference to a person evokes such strong negative connotations that the comeback of such person to normal social functioning, on the contrary to a criminal, seems almost impossible.

The problem arises also in terms of interpretation of violence in order to qualify it as a terrorist act or a criminal act. P. Ress states: “it is possible to distinguish the violence

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2 An extensive overview of definitions and the complexity of the problem of defining the phenomenon of terrorism is presented by D. Duda, *Islamic Terrorism*, Kraków 2002, p. 9–16.
5 Latitude in defining people as terrorists and view events as terrorist poses the threat of branding innocent people on the one hand, as the history of Guantanamo shows. On the other hand, such a label can bring glory and honour as demonstrated in the case of the Libyan agent, Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi. Being terminally ill with prostate cancer, responsible for the terrorist attack over Lockerbie and convicted for the crime, he was released from prison by the British courts so he could end his life in his motherland. He was welcomed by Libyans as a hero.
of a terrorist from the one used by criminals. A terrorist performs his actions fighting for a particular case, trying to force a particular political vision.\textsuperscript{6}

The legal instruments make a distinction between the terrorist act and the act of illegal interference. It seems that the first case of political motivation of an act, the results of which are significant, distinguishes it from the other which may simply be a common crime. The history of legislation of the civil aviation safety is concentrated on the so-called Tokyo–Hague–Montreal aviation penal law identified as the beginning of the anti-terrorist legislation. This legal system confirms different approaches to the topic which may be illustrated by the exclusion of some groups of crimes from the category of political crimes and their treatment as common crimes, being subjected to standard prosecution.\textsuperscript{7}

The International Civil Aviation Organisation ICAO worked out three conventions: Tokyo, Montreal and Hague, which among crimes excluded from the right to asylum enumerate:

- illegal hijacking of a plane – such a crime is committed by any person who performs an act of violence, threatens to use violence on board of an aircraft in flight or in any other way takes control over an aircraft;
- performing an act of violence against people on board of an aircraft if that act is likely to endanger the safety of that aircraft;
- destruction of an aircraft in service or causing damage to such an aircraft which renders it incapable of flying or which is likely to endanger its safety in flight;
- placement of devices or substances which are likely to destroy that aircraft, or to cause damage to it or which render it incapable of flight;
- destruction or damages of air navigation facilities or interference in their operation, if any such act is likely to endanger the safety of aircraft in flight;
- deliberate communication of information which one knows to be false, thereby endangering the safety of an aircraft in flight;
- complicity in the crimes mentioned above.

In terms of general international anti-terrorist law this article would need to have a very broad character of description and analysis. It should be pointed out here that the problems with a definition of terrorism itself or particular national interests make it impossible to apply a uniform legislation concerning this issue, which is why law, in terms of combating terrorism, is strictly connected with the issue of national safety and includes international instruments of a universal nature. Laws passed under the auspices of the United Nations or other specialised agencies always had and have one common purpose, to respond to the internationalization of terrorism through internationalization of repressions and the instruments concern defined methods of terrorist acts not defined phenomenon as such.\textsuperscript{8}

The Polish penal law includes legal prerequisites to qualify certain acts as crimes of terrorist character, which may in social consciousness be equivalent to terrorist attack, penalising at the same time the participation in a group or its

\textsuperscript{6} P. Rees, Kolacja z terrorystą. Spotkania z najbardziej poszukiwanymi bojownikami na świecie, Kraków 2008, p. 51.


formulation or leadership when such groups aim at committing crimes of terrorist character. The following definition of a crime of terrorist character in article 115 § 20 of the penal code states that it is a “prohibited act endangered with prison sentence with an upper limit of at least 5 years, committed in order to: seriously intimidate many people, force the Polish legal authorities or authorities of another country or international organisation authorities to perform or stop performing certain actions, cause serious disturbance in the political system or economy of Poland, other country or international organisation – as well as a threat to commit such an act”.

The catalogue of such acts treated as illegal interference acts may be treated as crimes of terrorist type defined in penal code or may be qualified as common crimes. The motivation of the perpetrator, the size and the results of such an act will have most significant meaning in such categorisation, bearing in mind that the attack or a threat of the attack on airport infrastructure or an aircraft usually causes serious disruption in their functioning and significant financial and economical consequences. Contrary to the penal code definition of a crime of terrorist character (equal to the definition of a terrorist act), the National Civil Aviation Security Program\(^9\) regulates, in detail and at length, such acts which meet the definition of illegal interference act, and which are:

- the use of violence in flight of an aircraft towards a person on board, if the act is likely to endanger the security of the aircraft;
- destruction of an aircraft or damage to it, which renders the aircraft incapable of flight or may endanger the safety of such aircraft;
- placement on board of an aircraft of any object, device or substance which may endanger health or lives of passengers or crew or cause damages which may make the flight impossible or endanger the safety of aircraft in flight;
- hijacking of an aircraft with crew and passengers on board or without them, also in order to use the aircraft as a tool of terrorist attack from the air;
- destruction of or damage to any devices on the ground or on board or cause the malfunctioning in case when the cause is a significant disruption of air traffic or danger to safety of civil aviation;
- transmission of false information which causes danger to people and aviation buildings and equipment;
- destruction or serious damage of device at an airport, resulting in serious disruptions in air traffic or functioning of an airport or danger to the safety of civil aviation.

The catalogue presented above includes all terrorist acts posing a threat to safety of air traffic and airports known so far? and at the same time the Tokyo–Hague–Montreal legal system of the civil aviation safety.

**WHY DOES ONE NEED A DISTINCTION?**

The distinction between a terrorist act and illegal interference act may raise the suspicion of various implications for the functioning of critical infrastructure of an airport,  

first and foremost the designing of security and protection systems. As it may seem, providing safety will be adequate to anti-terrorist activities whereas the protection of civil aviation will be assigned to the prevention of acts of illegal interference. Such a course of thinking would imply the division or at least conduction of parallel actions. In practice, those areas overlap one another and widen the range of possible actions or use of certain instruments, for example legal ones. Also, the differences in prevention systems against terrorist acts and illegal interference acts are only slight. Let us take a closer look at them.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Systems of model solutions in the area of safety and protection of civil aviation against terrorist attacks differ from each other, depending on type of airport, infrastructure, character and type of passenger and cargo traffic, destinations or airlines operating in a given airport.

A concentric approach assumes that the elements which constitute the security system against terrorist acts are related to one another in a functional whole. The elements of such systems are always based on information (intelligence service, counter-espionage, criminal) and are connected with technical infrastructure and the influence of human factor. But they will include the area of actions much wider than the one prepared for the protection of aviation. The reason for this is simple. The Polish legal system of civil aviation protection, though universal, for example on the European Community\(^\text{10}\) or given country level, will be operationally adequate to one given airport (only and exclusively). Counteraction to acts of illegal interference in civil aviation results in introduction, by the manager of airport and civil services, of security systems and safety rules at an airport, which include:

- technical measures of protection such as control of access, permits, monitoring and technical barriers;
- physical security, including security control, protection of the buildings and areas, protection of aircraft and security shifts on boards of aircraft;
- intelligence actions;
- logistic sub-systems, including communication;
- properly trained staff;
- norms, rules and procedures;
- sub-systems of management.

Detailed description of the applied universal security and protection system of civil aviation on the national level for Poland was achieved by the introduction of the Na-

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\(^{10}\) Vide: Rozporządzenie (WE) nr 300/2008 Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 11 marca 2008 r. w sprawie wspólnych zasad w dziedzinie ochrony lotnictwa cywilnego i uchylające rozporządzenie (WE) 2320/2002 (Dz. U. L 97, 9.04.2008, p. 72–84, z późn. zm.), Rozporządzenie Komisji (WE) nr 185/2010 z dnia 4 marca 2010 r. ustanawiające szczególowe środki w celu wprowadzenia w życie wspólnych podstawowych norm ochrony lotnictwa cywilnego (Dz. U. L 55, 1905.03.2010, p. 1–55, z późn. zm.).
tional Civil Aviation Security Program as a regulation being an executive act of the Aviation Law Act.

The following methods and means were applied in reference to events under the name of act of illegal interference, which regulate the following areas:

1. **Airport Security Service.** The issues concerning tasks and competence of airport security service were regulated here and are compulsory created at big airports and, depending on the needs, at other airports.

2. **Airport security.** In order to make the access of unauthorised people impossible, all possible organisational measures are taken in airports to limit the possibility of free migration of people and vehicles. One of such measures is the division of airport to zones open for general use, restricted zones and critical zones within restricted zones. By introduction of the pass system all workers of the airport have access restricted to areas which are needed to perform their professional duties. This is a seemingly simple task, but in practice it becomes very difficult and complicated. Nowadays, airports are very complex organisms in which a lot of institutions function together realising various tasks, while serving the air traffic. The continuous undisturbed functioning of all the entities should be provided with simultaneous assurance of comfort for the passengers and maintaining all security rules. The management and national institutions have the whole range of possibilities to make use of. One should start with the installation of technical barriers. These are not only tight fences around the area but also their monitoring in the most troublesome places. It is necessary to limit the number of passages from one zone to another. It will limit the number of airport security posts and improve control over people migrating between the zones. Wherever it is possible, the access elements should be used, which automatically authorise the right to access a particular zone of the airport. It is important to use at least two means of authorisation. An access card exclusively is not a very effective form of protection. The loss of such a card or the card being stolen, causes a direct departure from the security system. Passing through such a passage should be authorised additionally by a security service member or by additional authorisation, for example alphanumeric code or biometric element. Passage between all access zones and restricted zones is possible only after security control. Separate passages for ground crew, cabin crew and for the passengers allow for the improvement of the whole process. When realising the security control one should take into account its effectiveness as well as the efficiency understood as the least possible inconvenience for the people subjected to it. In order to achieve this further, devices and technical solutions are being developed, more or less efficient and functional. The possibility of their application in practice is dependent on many factors, such as: efficiency, reliability, functionality and what is equally important – the cost.

3. **Security of aircraft.** The airline is responsible for the security of an aircraft. In case of stoppage there is an obligation to close the doors and the hatches and to seal them, which should protect against unauthorised access.

4. **Security control.** Security control is the most efficient method ensuring that no objects, devices or materials posing direct threat to the safety or which may be used to conduct an act of illegal interference, get through on board of an aircraft and into limited zone. Border Guards are responsible for security control in international avi-
ation communication and the airport security is responsible for security control connected with the access to restricted zones. Due to the subject of control there are: passenger security controls, crew controls and airport staff controls, controls of hand luggage, registered luggage, postal packages, loads, cargo of an airline, diplomatic post and control of the security of aircraft. It should be underlined that 100% of people entering the restricted zones and on board of aircraft are security controlled. In order to perform this high-quality specialised equipment is used:

- X-ray devices to x-ray luggage;
- multilevel systems to x-ray the registered luggage with systems to detect explosive materials and devices (EDS and EEDS);
- stationary and hand metal detectors;
- devices detecting vestigial amounts or vapours of explosives;
- pyrotechnical equipment to differentiate and neutralise in case of danger in the form of explosive materials and explosive devices.

Such equipment must meet the requirements specified by regulations, especially in terms of detection of materials and dangerous items.

5. **Prohibited objects which may not be carried into airport restricted zones and may not be transported in hand luggage or registered luggage of a passenger.** In order not to allow carrying in objects which may pose threat to the flight safety or the safety of the airport infrastructure on board of a plane or to the airport a list of prohibited items has been created. Such a list includes items which may not be carried into restricted zones and on board of planes. The list includes, among other items, weapons, explosives, inflammable or caustic substances, dangerous objects such as knives, ice-axes, sticks, sabres, and clubs. In a separate category there are dangerous substances, which were introduced by legislative of the European Union after the prevented attacks in London, which are all sorts of liquids and gels with a capacity of more than 100 ml. It should be pointed out that the list differentiates objects considered dangerous into those dangerous when used (for example knives), which is proved by the fact that some items may be transported but only in registered luggage, that is transported separately from the passenger.

6. **Methods and security means for transportation of weapons in aviation transport.** The above mentioned refers to transportation of firearms as well, which as such do not pose a threat. Their transport must be conducted separately from the passenger and placement of them in the cargo hatch is conducted under strict supervision of the airport security.

7. **Methods and measures applied in case of dangerous passengers or those violating the conditions of transport or airport safety rules.** The regulations of this section offer special security measures towards dangerous passengers or passengers violating the transport conditions or security of airport. Such passengers are particularly detainees, temporarily arrested or expelled from the territory of Poland or who were refused entrance to the territory of Poland. Taken measures refer particularly to the escort, leading on board before other passengers enter and leading out as the last person and the prohibition to serve alcohol.

8. **Methods and measures to protect the aircraft of general aviation.** In case of airplanes which do not operate regularly or private aircraft (general aviation) the secu-
rity methods are applied which aim at their separation and control of security of crews and passengers of such aircraft, as long as it is connected with access to restricted zones of airports or aviation operation to or from an airport.

9. **Methods and measures to prevent the crisis situations in civil aviation.** It should be pointed out here that prevention is only one element of security system in air traffic. Legal regulations provide the application of proper procedures in case of a crisis situation which means the presence or the possibility of the presence of an act of illegal interference. In case of the presence of a crisis situation the President of the Civil Aviation Office together with the Minister of National Defence, the President of the National Atomic Energy Agency and the Chief Sanitary Inspector take actions aimed at a solution of the situation. In practice, the actions on operational level include formulation of Crisis Headquarters and involvement of all airport services in solving the crisis situation. Passing on information about crisis situations in civil aviation is a vital element, as well as a formulation of proper risk analyses in this field. The President of the Civil Aviation Office is responsible for informative and analytic tasks.

10. **Security guards.** On the basis of the degree of danger judgement, the President of the Civil Aviation Office may qualify a given flight as a high-risk operation and let security guards on board. According to the regulations of the National Civil Aviation Security Program in Poland the security guards should be accompanied by Border Guard officers, properly selected and trained in the fields of knowledge concerning aircraft, results of using weapons on board and ways of putting a dangerous person out of action without the use of firearms.

It may seem that taken actions in case of both definitions are based on the same security system provision, but the broad intelligence actions performed by national security agencies or institutions dedicated to recognition of terrorist threats will be itemised by physical protection (infiltration and security controls). Additionally, it should be pointed out that in case of events indicating acts of illegal interference, repressions can be taken towards the perpetrator on the basis of common penal law in force and treated as common crimes. In case of qualification of an event as a terrorist act the actions will be taken by the proper anti-terrorist services (special services, terrorist units and sub-units). Such action will be of political character and will be understood through the prism of national interests.

**POSTSCRIPT: CRISIS SITUATIONS AND EVERYDAY LIFE**

An unattended luggage at an airport is a quite common and everyday situation. Such simple example shows the described implications.

If we deal with a forgetful, absent-minded person who in course of preparations to the flight or strong emotions connected with the flight simply forgot the luggage and left it at a place where he or she was standing or sitting, it will almost certainly be legally qualified as an offence. Such poor soul will be fined with a 500 Polish zloty ticket.

However, if some explosives or explosive devices are found in the same luggage and the perpetrator is too outgoing in their demands, such act may be treated as an act of criminal character. The danger of penalty will be differentiated, depending on its qualification, but it will remain a crime or an act of illegal interference.
A terrorist qualification will probably begin when the expectations to meet the demands appear. The character of such demands will have subordinate meaning. No matter if the demand is political, social or religious it still seems to have the trait of intimidation and constraint.

In such simplified qualification scheme which is further complicated in practice there is only one common issue: the actions taken by the security services. In each case, though on a differently advanced level, these will be pyrotechnic actions. Also always, but to a different extent there will simultaneously exist the fear and extortion of action. All such actions will be accompanied by certain financial, economical and psychological effects.

As it may be observed, “terrorism” may be and is a metaphor which justifies almost any act.

**ABSTRACT**

What makes the attacks on aviation transport so attractive is the fact that the act of aggression aimed at means of transport has an impact not only on the craft and vehicles themselves, but also on the critical infrastructure, the passengers, the crew and is followed by the wide interest of media due to the spectacular side of the event. The distinction between a terrorist act and illegal interference act may raise the suspicion of various implications for the functioning of critical infrastructure of an airport, first and foremost the designing of security and protection systems. As it may seem, providing safety will be adequate to anti-terrorist activities whereas the protection of civil aviation will be assigned to the prevention of acts of illegal interference. Such a course of thinking would imply the division or at least conduction of parallel actions. In practice, those areas overlap one another and widen the range of possible actions or use of certain instruments, for example legal ones. Also, the differences in prevention systems against terrorist acts and illegal interference acts are only slight.
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TERRORYZM NA POCZĄTKU XXI WIEKU

POJĘCIE, ISTOTA I PRZYCZyny ZJAWISKA