

DETERMINANTS OF TERROR ACTS ACCOMPLISHES-SUICIDE BOMBERS BEHAVIOR

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*“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of
enthusiasm”¹
(Winston Churchill)*

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze determinants which impact on behaviour of terror acts accomplishes-suicide bombers from psychological point of view, for example, whether there is a direct connection between Moon phases and suicide terrorists who conducted terror acts from 2015 to 2016 in the different parts of the world. The author also analyzes randomly selected terror acts carried out between 2016 and 2017 in the continent of Europe. Several factors have been taken into account, such as: terror acts location, suicide terrorist's citizenship, country of origin, age, education, criminal background, country's unemployment rate.

The novelty of this paper is the fact that this type of research was not been carried out yet. This will allow us to see a more precise direction which should be taken in order to effectively prevent terror acts and what kind of changes can be carried out in certain programs for identification of individuals who may be posed real threat to country's national security, can be easier involved into terror organizations activities than others.

Keywords: terrorism, terror act, terrorist suicide bomber, phase of Moon.

Paris (2015), Nice (2016), Berlin (2016), Manchester (2017), London (2017), Saint Petersburg (2017). What do these cities and dates have in common? One similarity is that they are the cultural

centers of Europe that attract a lot of tourists. Another is that shocking violent acts resulting in many casualties occurred in each of those cities.

The aim of this paper is to analyze whether there is a direct connection between Moon phases and suicide terrorists who conducted terror acts from 2015 to 2016 in the different parts of the world.

The author also analyzes randomly selected terror acts carried out between 2016 and 2017 in the continent of Europe. Several factors will be taken into account, such as: terror acts location, suicide terrorist's citizenship, country of origin, age, education, criminal background, country's unemployment rate. The novelty of this paper is the fact that this type of research has not been carried out yet. This will allow us to see a more precise direction which should be taken in order to effectively fight and prevent terrorism and the changes that can be carried out in certain programs meant to identify individuals who may be related to terrorist activities.

Introduction

Acts of suicide has always attracted the attention of the public eye, scientists, and researchers. This phenomenon raises the question what could cause a human being to choose such behavior. The above mentioned issue has been extensively researched and studied in the second half of the 20th century up until now. Especially cases that are qualified as terror acts by criminal law carried out by suiciders. Some researchers, such as J.M. Gutierrez-Garcia and F. Tusse² have tried to find a connection between human behavior and cosmic influence. In addition, many cultures regard Moon phases as a phenomenon that affects human psyche. During the period from 2014 to 2017, a significant increase in violent acts that can be qualified by law enforcement agencies as acts of terrorism has been noticed. This type of behavior is not new in human history. Historical research shows that terror acts as a tool to intimidate or frighten a certain part of the population have been used since the old days. A good example would be the events that occurred in first-century Judea, where several violent movements took place and sought to regain the independence of Jewish people. One of the fiercest groups of that time was known as the *Sicarii*. The name arose from the Latin word

Sicae, which refers to a concealed dagger that each group member carried hidden underneath one's clothing. Many historians also regard the *Sicarii* as a terrorist organization. During public events or occasions the members of this organization used to blend into the crowd with everyone else and deal with their enemies or targets by slitting their throat or stabbing them in the back³. Not only did this cause mass fear and panic among the people, but it also forced the authorities to tighten the law and impose rigorous punishments to those involved in such criminal acts. While the core of terror acts remain the same, but the targets, means and scale have changed. For example, the abovementioned *Sicarii* organization used terror as a means to fight their conquerors and oppression. Later on, the anarchist movement in the 18th century in Russian Empire used terror to target and kill the tzar, highest authority at the time. Another case is the Red Terror, which arose after the October Revolution 1917. It has accepted as an official policy and used by Bolsheviks on a country scale to eliminate those who were against communist regime. However, terror was not always used for political purposes⁴.

In the 21st century, one of the reasons for terrorist activity has been religion, an example being the Jihadist movement, which spread terror all around the world. While a terror act can be carried out in various ways, this research will mostly focus on acts carried out by suicidal individuals who may use such things as a weapon: explosive materials, firearms, knives or even trucks.

During the analysis of such occurrences and the history of terrorism, we can see that an insufficient amount of time and effort put when preventing the spread of terrorism and the involvement of people with terrorist organizations.

Object of research: identification of external and internal features such as Moon phases, mind state of perpetrator etc. on behavior of terror acts accomplishes-suicide bombers.

The aim of this paper to find a link between Moon phases and terror acts perpetrators. To reach the abovementioned objective, the following tasks have been set out:

- To find and distinguish terror acts amongst violent acts, crimes
- To locate the exact date and Moon phase present at the time of the terror act
- To analyze the social, economical, criminal backgrounds of terror act perpetrators.

Terror acts and statistical information

According to the free dictionary, a terrorist act is the calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear⁵. In this paper, the main focus will be the perpetrator of the terror act – human being.

To conduct this research, statistical information has gathered from open, publicly accessible sources, such as the Global Terrorism Database,⁶ EUROPOL reports,⁷ and the database of The Religion of Peace⁸.

November 13th of 2015 – an organized terrorist attack and suicide bombing was carried out in the Stade de France and the Bataclan theatre in Paris; March 22nd of 2016 – a suicide bomber attack took place at Brussels International Airport; July 14th of 2016 – while celebrating the 237th anniversary of the Bastille Day in Nice, a terrorism act was committed using a truck; December 19th of 2016 – a terrorist attack was committed using a stolen truck during the Christmas market in Berlin; March 22nd of 2017 – a violent terror act took place using an off-road vehicle in London; April 4th of 2017 – a suicide bombing was carried out at the St. Petersburg Metro Station; April 7th of 2017 – a hijacked lorry was deliberately driven into crowds of people in Stockholm; May 22nd of 2017 – a suicide bombing was committed in Manchester during American singer's Ariana Grande concert.

These are not the only terrorist attacks that occurred throughout the period in Europe. Not only did they take lots of lives, but also targeted important infrastructures or were carried out during important religious or state events where security was increased. For example, the terror act carried out during the football match on November 13th of 2015 was observed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the President of France Francois Hollande in Paris.

While analyzing data on terrorist acts and their frequency in the Member States of the European Union, it can be seen that the number of attacks was less frequent in 2014 compared to 2016. This has also confirmed by the Europol's annual report on the state and trends of terrorism in the European Union and other world countries. According to the data provided by Europol report (TE-

SAT 2017), in 2016, 1002 people had arrested due to connections with terrorist activities, of which the vast majority (718 people) are involved in the jihadist movement (Jihadism is an extremist Islamic branch whose followers recognize and encourage the use of force). Meanwhile, only 395 people had arrested in 2014. This number rose to 687 in 2015. In 2016, 135 out of 142 total casualties have killed by jihadists. In addition, almost a third of the arrested individuals in 2016 were 25 years of age or younger⁹. Younger people are not socially mature yet, thus it is easier to affect them in both direct contact and indirect, for example, with the use of social media and networks. That being said, it is important to identify measures which would reduce the likelihood of terrorist acts. To achieve this, criminologists, sociologists, philosophers, historians, forensics, and professionals of other sciences carry out various types of research and provides advice and recommendations that could help identify a potential terrorist from their body language or behavior in public places.

Types of suicide terrorists

The act of suicide itself perceived as a deliberate deprivation of one's life by various methods, such as hanging, shooting or similar. The reasons for suicide may vary from financial difficulties to temporary or permanent mental disorders due to developing illnesses, addiction to narcotic and psychotropic substances, or bullying. According to the statistical data on suicides in the world, in 2015, over 828,000 people committed suicide. Most of them were aged 70 years or more and lived in developed countries. In some countries there is a tendency for a significant proportion of suicides to be from the 15-30 years old age group¹⁰. On the other hand, suicide terrorists seek to take away as many lives as possible while causing fear, panic, and feeling of insecurity without any regard for their own life or well-being of others. While summarizing the data on terrorist acts, their perpetrators, and incentives, scientists distinguish six types of suicide terrorist:

1. Terrorist-zombie.
2. Terrorist-avenger.
3. Terrorist-patriot (does it for beliefs of the faith, ideas).
4. Terrorist-mercenary (hired for money).

5. Terrorist-prisoner (usually victims of blackmail, or forced against their will by terrorist organizations.
6. Terrorist-maniac (tend to have mental disorders)¹¹.

The following types are distinguished at academic works or papers and are mostly used to determine the reasoning and motives of the perpetrators behavior. However, this distinction is not relevant or applied in practice such as criminal investigation.

Effect of the Moon phase on the human psyche

While analyzing reasons for suicides, scientists have been trying to look into a widespread society belief that Moon phases may effect human behavior.

In order to review the impact of Moon phases on the human psyche and the links to suicides, a search was carried out in the legal journals of Lithuania called “Law”, “Jurisprudence”, “Public safety and public order” and publications on forensic and psychological issues, other databases. After researching the keywords “Moon phase and suicide”; “the causes of suicide”: “the effects of Moon phase on the human psyche” in Lithuanian and English from the period from 2001 to 2017, no scientific articles or publications were found that would try to determine the links between Moon phases and suicide terrorists psyche.

The author of the study carried out anonymous telephone interviews of 8 police officers and 3 prosecutors on the impact of the Moon’s phases on human beings and their willingness to commit crime or illegal actions. Some respondents indicated that criminal activity and suicide rates increased during a full moon, while others saw no connection whatsoever. Thus the questions arise: is there any connection between suicide and Moon phases or is it just a myth made us by society? Investigations on how the human psyche influenced by Moon’s phases, has been documented in other countries, but the results and conclusions are often different and contradictory. For example, in 1992 a research was carried out analyzing the relationship between Moon phases and the number of people that considered committing suicide (Owens M.; McGowan W. I., 2006)¹². However, no direct connections were found. Scientists conducting the research noticed that the authors of some works mistook the influence of a full

moon with festive days. However, different results were presented by National Public Health Institute of Finland (Saleva O.; Putkonen H.; Kiviruusu O.; Longvist J.¹³ 2007 and BBC News 2000), where they managed to find a direct connection and states that of 1400 suicides found that people were more likely to make an attempt on their life when there was a new moon. A higher rate of suicide also linked to phases of the Moon. Peaks has found at the phase of the new moon in autumn and winter, when it is darker at night and during the full moon in spring and autumn when there is an increased amount of light. These phases could be a dangerous period of time for those with suicidal ideas.

Terror act dates and Moon phases

Following the investigation on suicide terrorists, the author of this paper based on the Moon phase calendar and publicly accessible data from the website *www.thereligionofpeace.com* about terrorist acts carried out from 2015 to 2017, will try to determine the link between the Moon's phases and terrorist suicide psyche. The UTC (*Coordinated Universal Time*) time zone was used in this study, linking the start and end timings of individual Lunar phases.

Table 1.

Data statistics of dates and countries, where terror acts occurred from 2015 to 2017

Full moon		First quarter		Third quarter		New moon	
Date	Countries, where terror acts occurred	Date	Countries, where terror acts occurred	Date	Countries, where terror acts occurred	Date	Countries, where terror acts occurred
05 January 2015	Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan	28 January 2015	Libya	15 March 2015	Pakistan	20 March 2015	Yemen
06 January 2015	Turkey, Iraq	26 February 2015	Nigeria	18 April 2015	Afghanistan	22 March 2015	Iraq
07 January 2015	Iraq	27 March 2015	Somali	12 May 2015	Iraq	25 March 2015	Libya
10 January 2015	Lebanon and Nigeria	29 May 2015	Saudi Arabia, Pakistan	14 May 2015	Afghanistan	26 March 2015	Somali
11 January 2015	Nigeria	01 June 2015	Iraq	17 May 2015	Afghanistan	19 May 2015	Libya, Afghanistan
07 March 2015	Nigeria	24 June 2015	Somali	13 June 2015	Iraq	21 May 2015	Libya
04 May 2015	Afghanistan, Iraq	25 June 2015	Syria	15 June 2015	Chad	22 May 2015	Saudi Arabia

05 May 2015	Afghanistan, Iraq	26 June 2015	Kuwait	11 July 2015	Chad	22 June 2015	Nigeria
10 May 2015	Afghanistan	28 June 2015	Nigeria	12 July 2015	Iraq	17 July 2015	Nigeria, Iraq
08 June 2015	Pakistan	30 June 2015	Afghanistan	13 July 2015	Pakistan, Cameroon	20 July 2015	Turkey
07 July 2015	Nigeria	25 July 2015	Iraq	7 August 2015	Afghanistan	16 August 2015	Pakistan
31 July 2015	Nigeria, Yemen	26 July 2015	Nigeria, Cameroon, Somali	10 August 2015	Afghanistan, Iraq	20 September 2015	Cameroon, Nigeria
02 August 2015	Turkey	29 July 2015	Iraq	05 October 2015	Iraq	14 October 2015	Nigeria
06 August 2015	Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan	30 July 2015	Iraq	07 October 2015	Yemen	12 November 2015	Lebanon
03 September 2015	Yemen, Cameroon	24 September 2015	Yemen	10 October 2015	Turkey	13 November 2015	France
02 October 2015	Nigeria	23 October 2015	Pakistan	12 October 2015	Cameroon	18 November 2015	Nigeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina

04 October 2015	Niger	26 October 2015	Saudi Arabia	4 November 2015	Egypt	11 December 2015	Cameroon, Afghanistan
27 October 2015	Iraq	20 November 2015	Iraq	5 November 2015	Lebanon	12 November 2015	Iraq
27 November 2015	Nigeria	21 November 2015	Cameroon	9 November 2015	Chad, Cameroon	16 December 2015	Nigeria
28 November 2015	Iraq	22 November 2015	Nigeria	4 December 2015	Nigeria	22 May 2017	United Kingdom
30 November 2015	Iraq	24 November 2015	Tunisia, Egypt	5 December 2015	Chad		
02 December 2015	Cameroon	21 December 2015	Afghanistan	8 December 2015	Afghanistan		
25 December 2015	Bangladesh	14 July 2016	France	9 December 2015	Iraq		

28 December 2015	Afghanistan, Syria	4 April 2017	Russia	19 December 2016	Germany		
29 December 2015	Pakistan	7 April 2017	Sweden	22 March 2017	United Kingdom		
30 December 2015	Syria						
22 March 2016	Belgium						

Table 2.

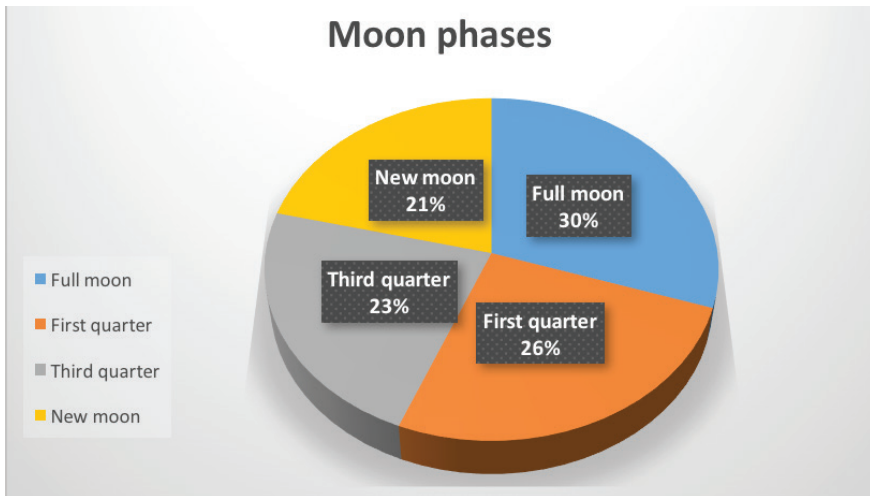
Total number of incidents and total number of countries

	Full Moon	First Quarter	Third Quarter	New Moon
Total number of incidents	37	32	28	26
Total number of countries	13	16	12	14

When comparing the timing of terror acts with Moon phases, there may be an inaccuracy of up to 5 percent due to different terror act starting point markings in some locations or time zone differences. When assigning terrorism acts to moon phases, there may also be an inaccuracy of up to 3 percent, as 4 out of 123 analyzed terrorism acts began at the intersection of two moon cycles – the ending of one and the beginning of another.

Figure 1.

Data statistics in percent



Even though most terror acts occurred during a full moon, there is no clear, direct connection or link between the terror act and the Moon phase present at the time. This had also confirmed in an article published by the „Journal of Criminal Justice” at 2010. A research was carried out in San Antonio, USA, which looked for connections or any other type of relation between recently committed crimes and Moon’ phases, however no concrete evidence was located¹⁴.

Social, geographical, criminal background of terror act perpetrators

The author of this paper randomly selected and analyzed 15 terrorist act cases carried out in the territory of the European Union from 2015 to 2017. The author of this paper selected for analyze

terror acts mostly carried out in the biggest European Union member states such as: Germany, The United Kingdom, France and Italy. To find out more about the perpetrators country of origin, age, criminal background and other factors publications from various sources, such as “The Guardian”, “The New York Times”, “Al Jazeera”¹⁵
¹⁶ ¹⁷ “Wikipedia”, “BBC”, “The Statistics Portal” and sites *www.thereligionofpeace.com*, *www.start.umd.edu*

Table 3.

Characteristics of terrorists

Date and moon phase	Country, Place	Kind of violence, number of victims	Characteristics of terrorists			
			Geographical	Social	Criminal background	Other information
3 August 2017 Moon phase – First quarter	London, The United Kingdom,	stabbed 6 people	Norwegian of Somali descent	19 year-old	No information	mental health issues, which were as the possible cause of the attack
3 June 2017 Moon phase – First quarter	London, The United Kingdom	Killed 8 people and injured many others	Pakistan-born British citizen	26 year-old	Attempting to radicalize children	No information
			Moroccan or Libyan	30 year-old	No criminal records	No information
			Dual Moroccan and Italian citizenship	21 year-old	No information	No information
22 May 2017 Moon phase – Third quarter	Manchester, The United Kingdom	Killed at least 22 people and injured 59	British of Libyan ancestry	22 year-old	No information	No information
20 April 2017 Moon phase – Third quarter	Paris, France	3 police officers shot and one seriously wounded	French Arab	No informa- tion	Extensive criminal records	Mental health issues

7 April 2017 Moon phase – First quarter	Stockholm, Sweden	4 people killed and at least 15 injured using a truck	Uzbekistani	39 year-old	No information	No information
19 December 2016 Moon phase – Full Moon	Berlin, Germany	12 people killed, more than 60 injured using a truck	Tunisian	24 year-old	Several criminal records	No information
26 July 2016 Moon phase – Full Moon	Saint Etienne- du-Rouvry, France	Killed a priest with a knife	Algerian	19 year-old	Has criminal record	No information
			French	19 year-old	Has criminal record	No information
24 July 2016 Moon phase – Full Moon	Ansbach, Germany	Fifteen people injured in suicide bombing	Syrian	27 year-old	No information	Multiple suicide attempts, mental health issues
18 July 2016 Moon phase – first quarter	Würzburg, Germany	Injured 5 people with a knife	Afgan	17 year-old	No information	No information
14 July 2016 Moon phase – first quarter	Nice, France	Killed 86 and injured 458 people using a truck	Tunisian	31 year-old	Extensive criminal record	Mental health issues
10 May 2016 Moon phase – New Moon	Grafring, Germany	One killed, three injured with a knife	German	27 year-old	No criminal records	No information
22 March 2016 Moon Phase – First quarter	Brussels, Belgium	Killed 32 people and injured more 300 in a three coordinated suicide bombings	Belgian of Moroccan ancestry	29 year-old	Extensive criminal records	No information

			Belgian of Moroccan ancestry	24 year-old	Has criminal records	No information
			Belgian of Moroccan ancestry	31 year-old	Has criminal records	No information
			Belgian of Moroccan ancestry	27 year-old	Extensive criminal records	No information
			Swedish of Syrian origin	24 year-old	Has criminal records	No information
26 February 2016 Moon phase – Full Moon	Hanover, Germany	Injured a police officer with a knife	Moroccan-German	15 year-old	No information	No information
26 June 2015 Moon phase – First quarter	Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, Near Lyon, France	1 person decapitated, 2 injured during gas cylinder explosion	French of North African descent	35 year-old	No criminal record	No information
7 January 2015 Moon phase – Full Moon	Paris, France	Killed 12 people, injured 11 using firearms	French, Algerian descent	34 year-old	No information	No information
			French, Algerian descent	32 year-old	Has criminal records	No information
			French of North African descent	18 year-old	No information	No information

While further analyzing the data on terror acts carried out from 2015 to 2017 in Europe, it seems that most of them had carried out in France and followed by Germany and The United Kingdom. Surprisingly, from 2015 to 2017 Italy suffered the least amount of terrorism acts compared to the abovementioned countries, even though the number of migrants or even higher compared to some countries.

In summary of this fragmentary study, it has stated that the perpetrators of terror attacks in France mostly originate from the Maghreb countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria. The bigger part of the perpetrators, were between the ages from 20 to 30 and have not yet created a family. More than half of the suspects had been known to the police and some of them participated in special de-radicalization programs aimed at correcting their behavior. Furthermore, a part of the suspects had been already involved in some sort of criminal activity in the past or had severe mental or psychological issues. However, even though some perpetrators did not have any prior criminal records, they were still an object of investigation for intelligence agencies.

The unemployment rate statistics show that over 20% of people from Pakistan and Bangladesh are unemployed, the rate for other nationality migrants is 11%, while the overall statistic is 6% in The United Kingdom. The unemployment rate amongst migrants in Germany is 21% while the overall country statistic is 8%, and the equivalent in France is 22% amongst migrants and 13% among the whole country.

Overall unemployment rate in Italy is 11.1 %, while the overall statistic of the unemployment rate amongst youngsters is 37 %^{18 19 20}. As we can see, the unemployment rate is several times higher among migrants compared to the average of the country. At the same time, this may pose certain difficulties for the migrant when adapting to the new culture. It may be harder for them to join local communities, raise one's qualification, improve professional skills, etc.²¹

Conclusions

1. There is no clear, direct connection between terror acts conducted by suicide terrorists in 2015-2016 in different parts of the world and Moon phases present at that time. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that Moon phases have any notable influence on the psyche of suicide terrorists.

2. Throughout the period from 2015 to 2017, the largest numbers of the terrorism acts had been carried out in France. The perpetrators of terror attacks in France mostly originate from the Maghreb countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria. The bigger part of the perpetrators, were aged from 20 to 30 and have not yet created a family. More than half of the suspects were already known to the police and the country's security services.

3. From 2015 to 2017, close to none terror acts occurred in Italy, even though the number of migrants in the country is on par or higher compared to other European Union countries such as The United Kingdom, France, Germany.

4. The unemployment rate in Germany, The United Kingdom, France, and Italy is several times higher among migrants compared to the average of the country.

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Anotācija

No 2014. līdz 2017. gadam ir ievērojami pieaudzis vardarbīgo darbību skaits, ko tiesībaizsardzības iestādes kvalificē kā teroristiskus aktus. Tomēr šādas vardarbīgas darbības cilvēces vēsturē nav jaunums. Terora vēsturiskie pētījumi liecina, ka terora akti, kuru

mērķis ir iebiedēt sabiedrību, atsevišķas valdības vai pat reģionus, ir zināmi jau no senajiem laikiem.

Analizējot iemeslus, kādi var pamudināt personu izlemt atņemt sev dzīvību, izdarot terora aktu, daži zinātnieki, it īpaši tiesību zinātņu un medicīnas, cenšas pārbaudīt Zemes pavadoņa Mēness fāžu ietekmi uz cilvēka psihi. Pētījumi par saikni starp pašnāvībām un Mēness fāzēm, izmantojot dažādas metodikas, ir veikti dažādās valstīs, taču to rezultāti un secinājumi ir atšķirīgi, bieži vien pretrunīgi.

Pētījuma autors, lai pārbaudītu, vai pastāv saistība starp terora aktiem un Mēness fāzēm, izmantojot plašsaziņas līdzekļos publicēto informāciju, analizē informāciju par terora aktiem, kas izdarīti no 2015.- 2017. gadam. Pētījumā analizēti dati par teroristu – pašnāvnieku terora aktu vietu un laiku, kā arī Mēness fāzi terora akta laikā. Autors analizē vai pastāv tieša saikne starp Mēness fāzi un teroristu-pašnāvnieku uzvedību.