

Review of the publication “DEFINING TERRORISM” by Prof. Emeritus Alex P. Schmid, PhD

REVIEW

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The publication - report entitled “Defining Terrorism”, authored by Professor Emeritus Alex P. Schmid (1943), was published in March 2023 by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. In addition to the abstract, the report is divided into five parts: Introduction; Psychology of Terror – The Fear and Threat Factor; Definitions; Conclusion and Appendix: A Selection of Definitions/Descriptions of Terrorism. At the end, a bibliography and information about the author are listed.

Professor Emeritus Alex P. Schmid, PhD, is a leading world expert on security science and counter-terrorism and an associate of the International Center for Counter-Terrorism. Between 1978 and 2018, Alex Schmid was a professor at Leiden University, Erasmus University (Rotterdam) and St. Andrews University, as well as visiting professor at other universities, including Harvard and Nanyang. Emeritus Schmid is a corresponding member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Also, between 1999 and 2005, Dr. Schmid was Officer in Charge of the UNODC’s Terrorism Prevention Branch in Vienna. Since 2009, he has been one of the three directors of the Terrorism Research Initiative, a consortium of institutes and scholars working together to study terrorism.

The report entitled “Defining terrorism” summarizes and builds on some of the author’s previous conceptual papers. The term „terrorism“ is constantly being defined and redefined², and this work offers a good con-

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² When this author googled ‘definition of terrorism’ back in 2014, he got 48 million hits; in 2019 there were 136 million and, by mid-2022, there were 238 million hits.

ceptual framework that can be used to overcome numerous doubts faced by states and international organizations. The work is all the more significant because it was written by a leading world expert who, in a way, systematized and summarized his previous scientific achievements in terms of defining terrorism. The author writes in an easy, simple and understandable style, in English. Since the Report consists of only 45 pages, the reader can read it very quickly. The routine and experience of Professor Schmid is easy to notice.

Professor Emeritus Schmid approaches the definition of terrorism from five different angles:

- focusing on the history of terrorism;
- by focusing on the psychology of “terror” (the fear and threat factor);
- by focusing on forms of political violence other than terrorist violence;
- by focusing on the terrorist act and
- focusing on terrorists.

Each of the mentioned approaches is explained in detail by the author. At the beginning, he talks about the etymology, historical roots and development of the term “terrorism”. Next, Professor Schmid defines terrorism in relation to the fear and threat factor. According to Schmid’s concept, a terrorist uses violence or a threat aimed at a direct victim (the target of the attack) but, through the mass and social media, he also hits his ultimate target, that is, a larger group of people who feel intense fear on a collective level - terror. The author calls this cycle “psychology of terror”. In the continuation of his work, the professor emeritus makes a distinction between terrorism and other forms of political violence - interstate war, civil war, state repression, genocide, ethnic cleansing, military coup, etc. After that, the author gives definitions of terrorism in relation to the terrorist act, and then also in relation to the perpetrator of the terrorist act - the terrorist. Therefore, the author defines the terms “terrorist act” and “terrorist” in a very concise way.

In the second part of the paper, professor emeritus Alex P. Schmid reminds us of the important fact that the definitions of all terms, including the term terrorism, reflect the interests of those who define those

terms. Starting from this assumption, the author turns to a crucial question: Who should have “definition power” that is, the authority to frame and steer the public discourse by labelling some manifestation of politically motivated violence ‘terrorist’ and implicitly, excluding other forms of political militancy from being assigned with such a pejorative term? In this context, Professor Schmid talks about five actors:

- terrorists;
- mass and social media;
- national governments;
- United Nations
- academics.

In the continuation of the work, the author presents and briefly explains certain definitions of terrorism given by the aforementioned actors. The diversity of those definitions mainly a political one, linked to the divergent interests of those holding state power, defending their own interests in their domestic and foreign rivalries and conflicts - not one linked to the limitations of the social sciences.

Finally, after the conclusion, the author leaves an Appendix: Selection of Definitions/Descriptions of Terrorism. In this appendix, the author lists a number of definitions of terrorism, whether they are the result of the work of international organizations, national governments or different authors from the scientific and professional world.

Professor Emeritus Alex P. Schmid, PhD, left a deep mark in the history of the development of security science. The first world authority in the field of the counter-terrorism, although in his late years, tries to sublimate his impressive scientific work and offer practical solutions to security services, governments of national states and international organizations. This report of his is a significant paper, bearing in mind all the complexity of terrorism as a phenomenon.



Evropski pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini

"Orden naroda, građanki i građana Bosne i Hercegovine"
kraća verzija-"Orden Evropskog pokreta u BiH",
koji je ustanovljen 15.12.2010. godine, povodom
ukidanja Viznog režima za građane BiH,
uručuje za posebne zasluge

**Prof.dr
Duško Vejnović**

Redovnom profesoru Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci za predmete Sociologija, Sociologija sporta, Sociologija slobodnog vremena, Bezbjednosne nauke; Predsjedniku Evropskog defendologija centra u Banjoj Luci, Predsjednik Udruženja nastavnika i saradnika Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci, Predsjednik naučnog udruženja Sociološki diskurs u Banjoj Luci, Glavni i odgovorni urednik naučnih časopisa Defendologija i Sociološki diskurs, Osnivač i utemeljitelj Defendologije kao nauke o zaštiti, odbrani i bezbjednosti na naučnom diskursa zaštita+odbrana= bezbjednost, značajan doprinos razvoju nauke i visokog obrazovanja u BiH sa jasnom porukom da "Obrazovanju treba vratiti obraz".

Dobitnik je Povelje Kapetan Miša Anastasijević 2019 godine iz Srbije za izuzetan doprinos razvoju nauke i obrazovanja, te dobitnik je Plakete Grada Banja Luka 2022.godine za izuzetan doprinos razvoja nauke i obrazovanja, od 1995. godine do danas daje veliki doprinos razvoju tzv.trećeg sektora-tj razvoja nevladinih organizacija u BiH i regionu.

Evropski pokret u BiH apsolutno podržava zalaganje i angažman uvaženog prof.dr Duška Vejnovića, kao jednog od najvećih intelektualaca i posebno zaslužnih pojedinaca Bosne i Hercegovine.

**U Sarajevu, Bosna i Hercegovina
Parlamentarna Skupština BiH
27.03.2023.godine**

**Predrag Praštalo
Predsjednik
Evropski pokret u BiH**



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Great recognition to the editor-in-chief,
Duško Vejnović, PhD,
full professor at the University of Banja Luka