

Abstract: An analysis of the potential of violence in nation states

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The global security-political developments of the last two decades have been highly determined by uncertainties. This especially applies to dealing with existing or beginning conflicts. In the following, terrorism as an instrument of violence is to be classified into the understanding of national and international conflicts, and at the same time a possibility is to be presented how to assess the development of conflict potentials and measures of improving the security situation in a nation state. Terrorism generally is considered an unforeseeable risk. Attacks are perceived as violent communication, used to force a reaction by its impact on a population, or directly by its impact on relevant decision makers of a society. Terrorism is characterised by four features which are mutually conditional and boost each other:

1. The specific manner of the use of violence.
2. A small number and a specific extent of organisation of the actors.
3. A destructive approach when exercising power.
4. A belief determined by fanaticism as well as the willingness to take supposedly abnormal action and/or to adopt abnormal attitudes. The presented method of ideally-comparative country analysis for assessing the potential of violence in nation states more or less represents the systematic evaluation of existing cultural-historical and socio-economic data, an evaluation oriented by a model perception of terrorism as mainstream-oppositional violence. By means of an empirically justified prioritizing of connections of the various reasons, conflict fields are identified which then enter into comparisons of states or of different points in time. Conclusions are drawn from the respective divergences, and thus conclusions for concrete conflict fields in a society become possible. For this reason, this method cannot be applied for the concrete prediction of violent events. It is possible, however, to explain developments and to identify tendencies and their causes after the event, without knowing the oppositional organisation structures, of, for instance, paramilitary formations, or without knowing about considerable influencing control by a nation state. By such a systematized and standardized inquiry and evaluation of relevant indicators, done by several states for a longer period of time, it might become possible, in a security-political environment which has become more and more complex, to use the resources precisely to prevent conflicts, in order not to be surprised by supposedly suddenly occurring events, or not to prematurely jeopardize successful action by mono-causally determined patterns of action.

