

Managing the security of the most important people in the state

Explanatory essay

Marcin Lipka

The Research Center on Social and Economic Risks,
Collegium Civitas

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0931-4036>

Mental models versus reality

Mental models are various strategies, simplifying rules and shortcuts to reduce the burden on the brain associated with information processing. These simplifications help with decision-making and dealing with the ambiguity and complexity of information, but can also lead to persistent and predictable mental errors, referred to as cognitive biases¹.

¹ R.J. Heuer, Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, https://www.ialeia.org/docs/Psychology_of_Intelligence_Analysis.pdf, pp. 111–169 [accessed: 9 VI 2024]. For more on mental models see: M. Lipka, *Bezpieczeństwo antyterrorystyczne w świetle procesów podejmowania decyzji przez personel obiektu infrastruktury krytycznej* (Eng. Counter-terrorism security in the light of decision-making processes of critical infrastructure facility personnel), in: *Bezpieczeństwo antyterrorystyczne budynków użyteczności publicznej. Tom I. Analiza-diagnoza-case study* (Eng. Counter-terrorism security of public buildings. Vol. I. Analysis-diagnosis-case study), B. Wiśniewska-Paź, M. Szostak, J. Stelmach (eds.), Toruń 2018, pp. 57–86.

At the same time, rapid developments in many areas of life mean that it is now impossible to speak of any constant mental models. The conclusions presented in this essay, based on models as systems of thought and forms of scientific cognition, will also become obsolete as reality changes.

The above may indicate that both individuals and services working to ensure the security of the most important people in the state must find themselves in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand they have specific tasks, and therefore need a cognitive check on reality - to understand the various risks and threats, what they are doing and what might happen - and on the other hand, experience shows, that what they know now, the decisions and actions they take, what they anticipate, may be outdated tomorrow.

These statements are the starting point for the author's presentation of the adaptive decision-making cycle model.

Conclusion 1. The people and services responsible for security of the most important people in the state should have a maximum set of mental models to correctly interpret the changing reality and make the best decisions. It is also essential to be able to create new models and destroy those that are no longer useful.

What is a political assassination

With regard to the security of the most important people in the state, considered in a dimension that takes into account both fundamental values such as life and health as well as the freedom to conduct political and private activities, two main threats can be identified - assassination and attack. For the purposes of this essay, it has been assumed that an assassination is a planned and organised action the main purpose of which is to deprive the victim of life, and an attack is an act of aggression which main purpose is not the deprivation of life but may lead to it. The third danger, which is a derivative of the two mentioned, is a threat, understood as the announcement of causing a dangerous or disadvantageous situation for the person to whom it is directed. The state will be endangered by threats that induce psychological states detrimental to political decision-making. The indicated threats are materialised by the perpetrators of the action falling within the definition of the individual dangers. It appears that these perpetrators can be attributed with the feature of "agency" - the essential

characteristic of influencing a wider network of social relations through physical and/or psychological interactions with the person in authority².

Political assassination is one of the least explained forms of aggression among humans. To date, the efforts of researchers in the fields of history, psychology, sociology and political science fail to provide a complete explanation of this phenomenon³. An attempt to create a general theory of political assassination was made by Ronald F. White. He perceived that definitions of this type of homicide focus on three basic criteria: the political significance of the victim, the political motivation (as opposed to, for example, personal motivation) and the effect of the intended action (non-accidental and unnatural). In his opinion, throughout human history, behaviour leading to political assassination has always been shaped by two very complex sets of variables termed “motivations” and “capabilities”. These variables are influenced by technological evolution⁴. On this basis, White distinguished the basic elements constituting the theory of political assassination: targets (politicians), assassins and their motivations, capabilities, technologies and techniques⁵.

Political killings are, by definition, political events and it is therefore important to distinguish between political and non-political motivations. For an assassination to be considered political, it must be the result of an intentional act. These types of events have a high social resonance. Killers are complimented by some political circles, condemned by others. Some of the perpetrators immediately confess to their deed and give extensive explanations in order to benefit from media attention and publicity, others (...) *proclaim their innocence all the way to the gallows*⁶.

² M. Banks, *Materiały wizualne w badaniach jakościowych* (Eng. Visual materials in qualitative research), Warszawa 2009, p. 35.

³ R.F. White, *Assassination Discourse and Political Power: The Death of Alexander Litvinenko*, “Assassination Research” 2008, vol. 5, no. 2, https://www.academia.edu/6272282/Assassination_Discourse_and_Political_Power_The_Death_of_Alexander_Litvinenko, p. 1 [accessed: 13 VI 2024].

⁴ Nowadays, the impact of new technologies on motivations can be seen within the phenomenon of terrorism, as exemplified by so-called ‘grassroot cells’, i.e. small groups of individuals. They study internet forums that bring together radicalised individuals and in this way build up and strengthen their motivation to take terrorist action.

⁵ R.F. White, *Assassination Discourse and Political Power...*, pp. 3–5.

⁶ Idem, *A Prolegomenon to a General Theory of Assassination*, https://www.academia.edu/6272354/A_Prolegomenon_to_a_General_Theory_of_Assassination [accessed: 13 VI 2024].

Many myths have grown up around political assassins. The literature contains descriptions of the “characteristic features of a future murderer” and theses stating that potential killers are individuals suffering from personality disintegration and persecutory mania⁷. In reality, there is no description of what could be called a profile of a political assassin⁸, and mental illness is not the only reason for taking action leading to assassinations and attacks.

When writing about theories on political assassination, it is worth recalling a simple model of political assassination operating in the literature, based on Gary Becker’s economic theory of crime⁹, subsequently extended and empirically tested. The axis of this theory is the assumption that political assassination involves two elements: a demand for the commission of a crime generated by those expecting to profit from the consequences of the crime, and a supply in the form of potential victims (in this case, persons performing public functions) who are in a position to influence the degree to which they are targeted. Both groups are presented with options between which they make choices to maximise their benefits. According to Becker’s theory, the number of crimes committed (political assassinations) is the result of the interaction of demand and supply, or equilibrium¹⁰.

Conclusion 2. The behaviour leading to political assassination is shaped by two sets of variables - motivations and capabilities, constantly changing with technological evolution.

⁷ For example: J. Kaczyński, *Taktyka działań ochronnych. Ochrona osób* (Eng. Tactics of protective action. Protection of persons), Gdańsk 2009, pp. 31–32.

⁸ R.A. Fein, B. Vossekuil, *Protective Intelligence and Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Officials*, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/179981.pdf>, p. 13 [accessed: 9 VI 2024].

⁹ G.S. Becker, *Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach*, “Journal of Political Economy” 1968, no. 76, pp. 497–529.

¹⁰ B.S. Frey, *Why Kill Politicians? A Rational Choice Analysis of Political Assassinations*, <https://www.zora.uzh.ch/id/eprint/52279/1/iewwp324.pdf>, pp. 4–5 [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

Assassins, attackers and their motivations

Psychologists use the term motivation to describe a regulatory mechanism in the process of a person's management of energy in undertaking and performing an activity. Thanks to this mechanism, aspirations are formed in the mind, i.e. inclinations to undertake actions aimed at achieving a goal. A goal should be understood as a state of affairs project that arises in the human mind and acquires the capacity to guide its actions. The realisation of intentions requires the appropriate organisation of activities and concentration of energy, which is an essential function of the motivational process¹¹.

An important contribution to understanding the characteristics of assassins and attackers, and the motivations that drove them, has been made by empirical studies of assassinations and attacks on public persons¹² as well as other well-known individuals carried out in Western Europe and the United States of America, and on members of the royal family in the UK.

In the USA, the study included 83 imprisoned people who had carried out (or attempted to carry out) 74 assassinations and attacks on public figures or other important people in the country between 1949 and 1996. Six of these were carried out by 16 individuals who were members of organised groups, 68 by individuals acting alone (one person carried out two attacks).

After analysing the data, the researchers concluded that¹³:

- the assassins and attackers did not fit any American descriptive or demographic characteristics (or even several characteristics). Among the assassins and attackers were men and women, of different ages, with different levels of education and employment history, and with a variety of other demographic characteristics;

¹¹ J. Reykowski, *Procesy emocjonalne, motywacja, osobowość* (Eng. Emotional processes, motivation, personality), series: *Psychologia ogólna* (Eng. General Psychology), T. Tomaszewski (ed.), Warszawa 1992, p. 59.

¹² The author uses the concept of public figure as defined in *Council Decision 2009/796/JHA of 4 June 2009 amending Decision 2002/956/JHA setting up a European Network for the Protection of Public Figures* (Official Journal of the UE L 283/62 of 30 X 2009). A public figure is "any person, either in an official capacity or in a non-official position to whom a protection service is assigned in accordance with the national legislation of a Member State or pursuant to the regulations of an international or supranational organisation or institution".

¹³ R.A. Fein, B. Vossekuil, *Protective Intelligence...*, pp. 12–15.

- in most cases, mental illness was not the cause of behaviour leading to the assassination or attack. These actions were undertaken by people who saw them as a way of achieving their goals or solving their problems, which is quite rational. Only in a few cases did mental illness contribute to the carrying out of the assassination or attack. Significantly, the symptoms of the illness did not prevent them from carrying out their intentions (the results of this study contradict the prevailing circular belief in the United States that assassinations and attacks on public figures are often the result of irrational, incomprehensible motivation and that the perpetrators are mentally ill);
- on the issue of threats made by the perpetrators to public figures or state institutions:
 - 44 perpetrators did not direct threats to their victim,
 - less than 10% of the perpetrators addressed direct threats to their victim or state institution,
 - two-thirds of the perpetrators had conversations (with family, friends, acquaintances) or wrote down notes indicating that they were considering carrying out an assassination or attack.

Furthermore, it has been shown that individuals who have carried out an assassination or attack against a public figure often had more than one motive for their actions. They were motivated by, among other things, desire of¹⁴:

- gaining publicity,
- taking revenge for the wrongs done,
- ending personal problems by being killed by service personnel,
- drawing public attention to an issue,
- protecting a country or the world,
- establishing a special relationship with the victim,
- gaining financial benefits,
- making political change.

The results of this research indicate that mental illness is not a common cause of assassinations and attacks on public figures, and suggest that threats have no prognostic value for predicting and preventing threats.

¹⁴ R.A. Fein, B. Vossekuil, *Assassination in the United States: An Operational Study of Recent Assassins, Attackers, and Near-Lethal Approachers*, "Journal of Forensic Sciences" 1999, vol. 44, no. 2, <https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/ecsp1.pdf>, pp. 327–328 [accessed: 8 VI 2024].

Another group of researchers analysed assassinations and attacks on politicians that took place in Western Europe between 1990 and 2004¹⁵. Twenty-four incidents were analysed in which five people were killed and eight seriously injured. The age of the perpetrators ranged from 25 to 57, among them were five women. Apart from one case, they acted alone. In ten cases they were loners isolating themselves from society.

On the basis of the researches carried out, it was found that:

- in ten cases the assassinations and attacks were linked to the mental illnesses of the perpetrators, in nine cases – with political motivation, in four cases – to excessive alcohol consumption, in one case motivation was not established;
- almost all assassins and attackers diagnosed with mental illness, directed warnings in the form of disordered communication with future victims and attempts to physically approach them. In 11 cases, there were behaviours in the assassins and attackers that could be interpreted as warnings. These consisted of: putting up posters with demands, placing advertisements in newspapers, attempting to sue the government, carrying out chaotic correspondence addressed to politicians and the police, sending threatening letters to politicians, telling their friends about plans to carry out an attack or self-immolation. In some cases, such behaviour continued for several years.

The study concludes that early recognition of a fixation with a public figure and the communication carried out with that person can contribute to the identification of potential threat actors.

Through these research, other aspects of the motivation that led to assassinations and attacks on politicians in the Western Europe were also identified. Five of the assassins were members of militias or radical organisations. In three cases, the assassins intended to die in the course of attack, two were motivated by a desire of publicity and fame. Three attackers saw the attack as a revenge for their wrongs, eight wanted to publicise an issues, and four wanted to protect their country¹⁶.

¹⁵ D.V. James et al., *The role of mental disorder in attacks on European politicians 1990–2004*, “Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica” 2007, no. 116 (5), pp. 334–344. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0447.2007.01077.x>. The attacks took place in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

¹⁶ D.V. James et al., *The role of mental disorder...*, p. 340.

The results of the research in question suggest that, for practical reasons, it is beneficial to apply a distinction between politically motivated attacks and those to which the perpetrator's mental illness contributed. Assassins whose motivations are mainly political in nature very rarely signal their intentions, e.g. in the form of threats made to future victims. Safeguarding against this group of perpetrators consists primarily of direct physical protection of public figures, particularly in public places. Indeed, 22 of the 24 assassinations and attacks analysed occurred in these places. In contrast, in the majority of fatal attacks to which mental illness contributed, the perpetrators took prior actions that signalled their intentions. Most of the behaviour constituting a warning were easy to observe for those paying attention to such manifestations. In this regard, it should be concluded that some assaults caused by mental illness could have been prevented. This would have required greater awareness of the social environment, based on knowledge of the link between unhealthy interest in public figures and the assaults and attacks resulting from it. It is worth noting that a significant proportion of people with mental illness and manifesting such interest does not take dangerous action, but it cannot be ignored that there are some in this group who may do so¹⁷.

In the United Kingdom, 23 attacks¹⁸ on members of the royal family between 1778 and 1994 were analysed descriptively. In most cases (83%), the reigning monarch was the target. Only during two attacks, the perpetrators caused serious physical injuries to the victims, 19 had no such effects. None of the attacks were carried out in royal residences. Thirteen attacks occurred while the victims were moving, boarding or alighting from trains or cars. Two attacks occurred while the victims were riding horses, seven during public appearances (two while in the theatre, one at the races). Fifteen attacks were carried out in London, three elsewhere in the United Kingdom, three in New Zealand and two in Australia¹⁹.

In 13 cases, the perpetrators used a firearm (in six cases it was not loaded with combat ammunition or bang ammunition was used). Apart from one case, it was a short weapon. A knife was used in three attacks, stones in three and brass-headed walking cane in one. In two cases, objects

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 343.

¹⁸ The authors of the study used the term attack in the sense of a hostile action using a weapon or bringing physical contact with the victim.

¹⁹ D.V. James et al., *Attacks on the British Royal Family: The Role of Psychotic Illness*, "The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law" 2008, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 59–63.

not causing serious injury were used and in one indecent behaviour towards the Duchess was committed²⁰.

Based on an analysis of the perpetrators of the attacks, the following motives for their actions were identified²¹:

- extreme political commitment,
- pretension to the throne (delusions),
- a sense of having suffered harm (delusions),
- general anger at the world (delusions),
- anomalies of adolescence (seven of the attackers were in their teenage years),
- mental illness.

The primary aim of most perpetrators was to draw public attention to themselves, to the injustices they believed they had suffered, or to their political views. Many times the attack was a demonstration of discontent rather than an attempt to deprive the victim of life. This fact makes it possible to point out the similarity between the perpetrators of these actions and those who carried out attacks and assassinations on U.S. presidents. Despite the clear differences in the political context, many of the assassins in the two countries were mentally ill and created a spectacle of protest²². The research findings from the United States and the United Kingdom presented in this essay are similar. The difference lies in the differently distributed emphases. The paradigm of the person who attacks members of the royal family is the individual who, after a period of chaotic stalking²³ - resorts to a poorly prepared attack. In the U.S. study,

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 63-64.

²¹ The results of James et al.'s study on attacks on members of the royal family are referred to by the authors: J.R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, J. Hoffmann, *Public Figure Stalking, Threats, and Attacks: The State of the Science*, in: *Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures. A Psychological and Behavioral Analysis*, J.R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, J. Hoffmann (eds.), Oxford University Press 2008, p. 14.

²² R.T.M. Phillips, *Assessing Presidential Stalkers and Assassins*, "The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law" 2006, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 154-164.

²³ "According to the US statutory definition, stalking - is the intentional, malicious, repeated persecution and harassment of another person, threatening that person's safety. The broad pattern of behaviours that characterise this phenomenon includes: phoning, sending messages (sms, e-mail), sending unwelcome gifts and flowers, threats, aggressive behaviour, following, observing and harming". Quoted after: D. Piotrowicz, *Negocjacje kryzysowe i policyjne. Wybrane zagadnienia psychologiczne i kryminalne* (Eng. Crisis and police negotiation. Selected psychological and criminal justice issues), Warszawa 2010, p. 259.

the emphasis was on the pathway to violence, which is delineated by quasi-rational motivations reflecting mental disorders that have no negative impact on the planning process of the assault or attack. These two different models reflect the different realities in which they arose, as well as different perspectives on the same problem. One points to the need to reduce the risk of assaults and attacks by identifying people who send warning signals and including them in more effective mental health care. The second, on the other hand, emphasises the focus on measures of direct physical protection of public figures. Despite some differences in approach, both the SO14 Royalty Protection Branch (the component of the Metropolitan Police Service responsible for protecting members of the Royal Family in the UK) and the Secret Service maintain large databases with details of individuals who have threatened or harassed public figures. These databases are used, among other things, to regularly control the activities of individuals of interest to these services²⁴. Each year, the Secret Service monitors the behaviour of approx. 2,000 individuals who have directed threats against public figures. According to data cited in a 2010 publication, 13% of those monitored were referred for psychiatric treatment and 4% were arrested²⁵.

It should be noted that the typologies of attackers and assailants developed on the basis of the studies cited above are only an introduction to understanding their motivations. Currently, there is no good typology of those who stalk and attack public figures. Researchers and security services use the one that best fits their research and operational needs. This raises the danger of errors in risk assessment and threat management, caused by automatically fitting a case into a category from an adopted typology²⁶.

Furthermore, there is still a tendency to explain the behaviour of killers as being caused by personality disorders. This is politically advantageous as it allows the meaning of the assassination to be reduced to a random act of violence on the part of a mentally disturbed person. As a consequence, the killer or would-be killer ends up in a psychiatric institution, which is also politically advantageous as it depreciates his explanations

²⁴ D.V. James et al., *Attacks on the British Royal Family...*, p. 66.

²⁵ L. Pastusiak, *Zamachy na prezydentów USA* (Eng. Assassination attempts on U.S. Presidents), Warszawa 2010, pp. 37–44.

²⁶ J.R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, J. Hoffmann, *Public Figure Stalking...*, p. 13.

for the assassination. The extensive and ever-growing list of mental illnesses offers a set of diagnoses that can be made against an actual or would-be killer²⁷. Declaring the perpetrator insane dismisses suspicions of conspiracy, as such a person is considered to be uncooperative²⁸.

Based on my experience of serving in the Government Protection Bureau (BOR), I can state that in Poland preventive actions against persons making unauthorised contact with protected persons were carried out in a manner similar to that used by other security services in Western European countries. The complexity of activities requiring cooperation with other services and bodies as well as the number of cases conducted contributed to the construction and maintenance of a large database of such persons.

Conclusion 3. Security services should have their own typologies of those making unauthorised attempts to contact the most important people in the state. These typologies should be useful for operational purposes of assessing the risk of carrying out an assassination or attack. Where a risk is identified from a particular person - in the process of background checks of persons who are to have access to protected persons and facilities - that person should be monitored and have restricted access to protected persons.

Intentional covert support and the motivations of the assassins

What makes it difficult to formulate a general theory of political assassination is that some of the perpetrators act alone, while others have undercover associates who can provide them with support in terms of: information (intelligence), weapons, transport, alibi or safe haven after the assassination has been carried out.

Assassinations can be carried out by individuals or groups of individuals with an internal origin (the perpetrators are nationals of the state where the attack on a public figure is carried out) or an external origin (the attackers are nationals of a foreign state). Support can also come

²⁷ *Jak psychiatria robi z nas wariatów?* (Eng. How does psychiatry make us crazy?), "Świat Wiedzy" 2013, no. 11, pp. 98-105.

²⁸ M.N. Heyman, *A Study of Presidential Assassins*, "Behavioral Sciences and the Law" 1984, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 131-149; R.F. White, *A Prolegomenon to a General Theory...*

from either one's own state or from a foreign state, and sometimes from both at the same time.

Due to the varying levels of support for the perpetrator, their internal or external origins and their covert nature, in many cases there is difficulty in uncovering them. For example, after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, doubts arose as to whether Lee Oswald acted alone or was part of a larger conspiracy involving Cuba, the Mafia, oil tycoons, and secret government agents²⁹. While these doubts have given rise to a number of conspiracy theories, it would be a mistake to overlook in considering the motivations of political assassins those related to the interests of informal groups acting in an intentionally covert manner.

The following covert networks can be distinguished, which require monitoring for the sake of state security in general³⁰:

- criminal organisations,
- complex lobbying and/or fraudulent arrangements,
- terrorist groups,
- freemasonry organisations,
- foreign agent networks,
- anti-systemic social movements,
- subversive organisations.

Crucial in explaining the actions of the actors in these networks are their motivations. Following Jon Elster, four main types of motivations can be distinguished³¹:

- interests,
- emotions/passions,
- values/rationale,
- habits/addictions.

These motives may work synergically, concurrently or divergently. An example would be a paid murderer for whom the “work” performed

²⁹ R.F. White, *A Prolegomenon to a General Theory...*, p. 11.

³⁰ See in more detail: M. Lipka, *Motivations Leading to Attacks on Politicians*, “European Journal of Science and Research” 2018, no. 2, pp. 61–72.

³¹ J. Elster, *Reason, Interest and Passion In the East European Transitions*, “Social Science Information” 1999, no. 38 (4), pp. 499–519, from: A. Zybertowicz, *Dynamika nieformalnych grup interesów: perspektywa teorii wyboru publicznego – wprowadzenie* (Eng. The dynamics of informal interest groups: a public choice theory perspective - introduction), in: *Za kulisami. Szkice o władzy, interesach i bezpieczeństwie* (Eng. Behind the scenes. Sketches on power, business and security), K. Pietrowicz, P. Stankiewicz (eds.), Poznań 2012, p. 31.

can be a passion and at the same time a way to secure material needs. Of the motives listed, interests are considered to be the most important³².

Informal groups functioning as more or less loose social networks formed around the interests of their members take action to adapt to or actively influence their environment. In order to protect themselves from internal threats, these groups use discipline in the form of pressure, which in its extreme form is physical violence, and they neutralise external threats by, among other things, creating links that give them a hegemonic position on a particular playing field. This is intended to discourage confrontation with a specific network of links, among others, state agendas³³.

In my experience, identifying possible support to a person posing a potential threat or their links to informal interest groups has been the most time-consuming and complicated part of prevention efforts. This process can be even more complicated when there is a possibility that leading politicians may be involved in organised crime groups or lobbying and fraudulent arrangements.

An important place among the networks requiring monitoring are terrorist groups. The aim of terrorism is to create fear in order to gain control over the observers of a terrorist act through this fear³⁴. Terrorism experts repeatedly say that terrorist attacks are theatre aimed at those who watch, not at those who die³⁵. *The more important the target of the attack, the larger the audience and the wider the impact of the attack*³⁶. Even if the attack fails, it will still serve to publicise a cause.

There are many organisational forms among terrorist actors - hierarchical, networked, hybrid, "grassroots cells" operating as a specific type of franchise³⁷. A feature of large terrorist organisations is that decisions

³² A. Zybortowicz, *Dynamika nieformalnych grup interesów...*, p. 32.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.

³⁴ M. Filar, *Terroryzm – problemy definicyjne oraz regulacje prawne w polskim prawie karnym w swietle prawa międzynarodowego i porównawczego* (Eng. Terrorism - definition problems and legal regulations in Polish criminal law in the light of international and comparative law), in: *Terroryzm. Materiały z sesji naukowej* (Eng. Terrorism. Materials from the scientific session), V. Kwiatkowska-Darul (ed.), Toruń 2002, p. 17.

³⁵ Based on an interview with Krzysztof Liedel, Director of Terrorism Research Center at Collegium Civitas, TVN24, 25 IV 2009.

³⁶ Quoted after: *Encyklopedia terroryzmu* (Eng. Encyclopedia of terrorism), 1 ed., Warszawa 2004, p. 233.

³⁷ A. Krawczyk, *Terroryzm ugrupowań fundamentalistycznych na obszarze Izraela w drugiej połowie XX wieku* (Eng. Terrorism by fundamentalist groups within Israel in the second half

are taken at different levels. For example, an analysis of the possibility of Western countries being attacked by Hamas has shown that in this organisation, some decisions are made at a central level, others are taken by local commanders, by individual, autonomous cells or by individual members operating on their own, i.e. lone wolves³⁸. This makes it difficult to indicate in general terms what motivates terrorist organisations (or individual terrorists) to carry out attacks on public figures. It may be the belief that the assassination of an important politician will change the future and generate publicity for professed political ideas. It may be the belief that the elimination of a significant person will contribute to the overthrow of a government. There are also known cases in which the motivation of terrorists was related, among other things, to financial gain. As such, they have undertaken actions at the behest of state governments, organisations or individuals³⁹.

Some authors also point to the links between secret organisations and special services, which instrumentally exploit the motivations of terrorist organisations and organised crime groups to achieve their own goals. In his book *The Black Book of Freemasonry*, Guido Grandt described the theory of political ritual murder and his findings⁴⁰. He believes that in the case of political ritual murder assassination is a method of political discourse, a warning and a way of intimidating those involved, and a punishment inflicted on the victim by a secret society. Grandt states that (...) *characteristic*

of the 20th century), Katowice 2007, p. 212; M. Sageman, *Sieci terroru* (Eng. Understanding terror networks), Kraków 2008, pp. 169–170, 211–214; W. Grabowski, *Przyczyny, przebieg i skutki zamachu w Londynie z 7 lipca 2005 roku* (Eng. The causes, course and consequences of the attack in London on 7 July 2005), terroryzm.com, 23 VII 2005, <http://www.terroryzm.com/przyczyny-przebieg-i-skutki-zamachu-w-londynie-z-7-lipca-2005-roku/> [accessed: 13 VI 2024].

³⁸ M. Levitt, *Hamas. Polityka, dobroczynność i terroryzm w służbie dżihadu* (Eng. Hamas: politics, charity, and terrorism in the service of Jihad), Kraków 2008, pp. 303–315.

³⁹ Examples are provided by the biography of the notorious terrorist Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, aka 'Carlos', described in the book: J. Follain, *Carlos "Szakal". Czerwony terrorysta* (Eng. Jackal: The Complete Story of the Legendary Terrorist, Carlos The Jackal), Warszawa 1999; R. Faligot, R. Kauffer, *Służby specjalne. Historia wywiadu i kontrwywiadu na świecie* (Eng. Special Services. A history of intelligence and counterintelligence in the world), Warszawa 2006, pp. 758–760.

⁴⁰ G. Grandt, *Czarna księga masonerii. Tajna polityka, terror państwowy, skandale polityczne od rewolucji francuskiej do śmierci Uwe Barschela* (Eng. The Black Book of Freemasonry. Secret politics, state terror and political scandals from the French Revolution to the death of Uwe Barschel), Bielany Wrocławskie 2010, pp. 125–137.

of (political) ritual murders is their silence and concealment. Fabricating false leads, staging the crime scene, using substituted persons - these are typical activities in these cases⁴¹. He pointed to the assassination of Italian politician Aldo Moro as an example of an alleged political ritual assassination. It was thought to have been brought about by collaboration between Italian and foreign secret services, terrorist organisations and the Masonic lodge Propaganda Due.

Even if one considers the theories put forward by Grandt as conspiracy it would seem that in order to properly assess and interpret some political assassinations, knowledge of the political, special service, terrorist, grey (the political activities of secret societies) and black (the commissioning of political murders by governments) spheres must be sought. This issue can be organised by the scheme: arbalister - crossbow - arrow - target, already used ca. 2 300 years ago by the Chinese strategist Sun Pin⁴². For example, a target is a public figure, an arrow - a terrorist organisation, a crossbow a secret service. And who is the arbalister?

In Western literature, there is a concept of *direct attacks*. It refers to a situation in which a state carries out the physical elimination of an important political leader or military commander of another state in order to achieve tangible political or military gains for itself⁴³. The term *decapitation attack* is also used (e.g. in the Russian Federation) to denote the elimination of key individuals in a state preceding an armed conflict with it⁴⁴.

Current examples of a decapitation attacks are the attempts to assassinate the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In 2024, officers of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) detained five people, including two colonels of the Ukrainian service protecting top officials, who were planning assassinations of, among others, the president, the head of the SBU and

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 118.

⁴² Sun Pin, *Military Methods of the Art of War*, Barnes and Noble Books 1995, pp. 122-126, quoted after: B.Z. Szalek, *Kilka prakseologicznych uwag na temat walki z terroryzmem* (Eng. Some praxeological remarks on the fight against terrorism), in: K. Kowalczyk, W. Wróblewski, *Oblicza współczesnego terroryzmu* (Eng. The faces of contemporary terrorism), Toruń 2006, p. 7.

⁴³ S.T. Hosmer, *Operations Against Enemy Leaders*, RAND Corporation 2001, pp. 9-46.

⁴⁴ J. Kallberg, *Russia's Military - Losing the Will to Fight*, CEPA, 15 IX 2022, <https://cepa.org/article/russias-military-losing-the-will-to-fight/> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

the head of Ukraine's military intelligence service, on behalf of Russian special services. According to information released by the SBU, one of the tasks assigned to the conspirators by the Russian special service was to find someone among the members of the President's security who would take the Ukrainian leader hostage and then kill him. In a published announcement, head of the Security Service of Ukraine Vasily Maluk stated: *A limited number of people knew about our special operation, and I personally monitored its course. The terrorist attack, which was supposed to be a gift to Putin, was in fact a failure of the Russian special services*⁴⁵.

These reports show the importance of counterintelligence security of officers directly protecting the most important people in the state. During my service, I organised counter-intelligence prevention training for officers of the Government Protection Bureau, conducted by experienced officers of the Internal Security Agency. An important preventive measure should also be a systematic checking the loyalty of an officer (in the case of protection of the most important persons in Poland, it is the State Protection Service) as part of a psychophysiological examination using a polygraph.

Conclusion 4. In the case of a threat from organised groups acting in an intentional covert manner, the effectiveness of the intelligence and counterintelligence services is of utmost importance. In turn, the security service responsible for the direct physical protection of the most important persons in the state must be ready to repel an assassination or attack attempt at any place and time, even in the absence of advance information about the threat. Direct protection officers should be covered by permanent counter-intelligence security.

Possibilities of carrying out an attack

Whether an assassination attempt will occur and be successful depends on a number of factors relating to the feasibility of the attack. These consist of the capability of the assassins themselves, accessibility to the public figure, knowledge of his or her current whereabouts.

⁴⁵ *Pięciu szpiegów FSB planowało zamach na Zelenskiego* (Eng. Five FSB spies planned the assassination of Zelensky), InfoSecurity24, 7 V 2024, <https://infosecurity24.pl/zagranica/pieciu-szpiegow-fsb-planowalo-zamach-na-zelenskiego> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

The potential of a person or group of persons means their ability to use a particular method of assassination, which capacity is determined by access to the means used in a particular method. For example, if an assassin intends to carry out an assassination using a gun, he must ensure that he has access to this weapon and ammunition. In order to get close to the victim, he or she must demonstrate reliability in gathering information and specific skills, such as socio-technical skills. These include the ability to “getting into character”⁴⁶, which can be improved through training. Getting into character, for example, a uniformed service officer, a soldier or a member of a reconstruction group can enable an armed assassin to approach his or her victim at a reasonable distance without arousing the suspicion of direct protection officers. Once the assassin succeeds in achieving favourable conditions for firing a shot, he or she must demonstrate the mental and motor conditions to overcome the stress, concentrate, get his weapon, aim and fire an accurate shot and possibly subsequent shots, which will already be accompanied by a reaction from the security members.

The potential to be taken into account in the protection of public figures is contained within a continuum defined by two conventional poles - a minimum and a maximum. The minimum potential can be attributed to a single person without adequate knowledge and skills, making a spontaneous attack attempt, equipped with low-tech means (e.g. a knife), the use of which requires a minimum distance from the protected person, i.e. direct physical contact. The latter potential can be attributed to the special services having access to the entire scientific and technological potential of their state.

⁴⁶ Getting into character is defined as “creating a fictionalised scenario in order to persuade the victim to disclose certain information or take certain actions. It is the creation of a story and the selection of costume, personality and attitudes that make up the characteristics of the character being played”. See: Ch. Hadnagy, *Socjotechnika. Sztuka zdobywania władzy nad umysłami* (Eng. Social engineering: the art of human hacking), Gliwice 2012, pp. 104–105. An example of getting into character can be seen in Ralph Napierski’s attempt to get into a meeting of cardinals at the Vatican. In a makeshift disguise resembling a cardinal’s outfit, he passed through all the Swiss Guard posts without much trouble and almost got into the meeting room. He was stopped by other cardinals who pointed out his inappropriate attire. See: *Fałszywy kardynał na spotkaniu w Watykanie. Przepasany szalikiem i w kapeluszu a`la Capone* (Eng. Fake cardinal at Vatican meeting. Girded with a scarf and wearing a hat a`la Capone), TVN24, 4 III 2013, <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/falszywy-kardynał-na-spotkaniu-w-watykanie-przepasany-szalikiem-i-w-kapeluszu-a-la-capone-ra309849-1s3429198> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

In the opinion of Robert Oatman, an expert in the field of personal protection, the analysis of hundreds of successful and unsuccessful attacks on public figures allows to distinguish the so-called attack vector, which consists of steps taken by attackers. The standard attack vector includes three phases: planning, preparation and execution. It ends with achieving the goal. As a theoretical construct, the attack vector is not just a spatial path leading from the assassin to the public figure being the target. It consists of many factors and steps that can be woven into the plan of the attack, including the number of the group of assassins, the detail of the plan and the choice of the means of attack. Depending on the whole factors, the attack vector may be characterised by a smaller or larger force⁴⁷.

It is worth noting that the literature on the subject provides many examples operating models. Due to operational usefulness for attention deserves the cycle of terrorist attack described in a series of articles posted in 2004, on the Stratfor website. Scott Stewart and Fred Burton, experts on terrorist and criminal threats, pointed out that the assassination process involves six phases forming the so-called terrorist attack cycle. These are: target selection, planning, dislocation, attack, escape, exploitation of the assassination⁴⁸.

Terrorists most often choose a target of symbolic significance or the one whose attack will cause the greatest media reaction. During the selection phase, many pre-selected targets are analysed. The detail of the analysis will depend on the potential of the terrorist group and securing the targets before recognition. The internet makes this phase of the attack cycle much easier than in the past. On websites, terrorists can find, among others, photos of events with the participation of public figures, information on security measures, maps, room schedules in buildings.

Years later, after re-examining the subject, Stewart stated that the terrorist attack cycle is still useful, only to be seen flexibly, not statically. For example, with some attacks (such as those on the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998), the identification and choice of the target of the attack took a long time and was a complex action. In turn, in others, the identification of the target – when choosing a vehicle as a means of attack

⁴⁷ R.L. Oatman, *Executive Protection: Rising to the Challenge*, ASIS International 2009, pp. 95–97; idem, *Executive Protection: New Solutions for a New Era*, Noble House 2006, pp. 57–80.

⁴⁸ F. Burton, *Stratfor on the Terrorist Attack Cycle*, Rane Worldview, 3 XII 2012, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/stratfor-terrorist-attack-cycle> [accessed: 8 X 2017].

on passers-by – boiled down to the terrorist’s knowledge of the crowded public places⁴⁹.

According to the cycle of terrorist attack, the one who wants to commit the attack must choose the target, plan the attack, obtain the weapon he wants to use, observe the target, and then implement his plan. In practice, a lone wolf terrorist is more prone to limitations, because he has to independently carry out each step. In this way, he exposes himself to being detected at more cycle points than a group that can assign individual tasks to different people⁵⁰.

In some cases, the possibility of an attack should be associated with the psychological profile of a public person. Some of these people tend to take excessive risks, both in professional and private activities, to ignore the threat of attack and not to comply with the rules set out in the adopted protection option⁵¹. While the psychological profile of the potential victim is crucial, the most important variables to consider when assessing the possibility of an attack on a public figure are location and accessibility. Nowadays, both of these variables are greatly influenced by technological development.

Conclusion 5. Security services should be able to respond in the event of the worst case scenario, that is, confrontation with the attackers with the highest potential, using complex methods and modern means.

Location and accessibility of public persons

Numerous examples from history can be pointed to confirm the effectiveness of the strategy of reducing the possibility of carrying out an assassination attempt on a targeted person by withholding information about his or her whereabouts (location). For a long time, it was used by, among others, the services protecting Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and Libyan leader Mu’ammar al-Gaddafi. In both cases, it was used in the authoritarian

⁴⁹ S. Stewart, *The Terrorist Attack Cycle Remains Unbroken*, Rane Worldview, 27 VII 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/terrorist-attack-cycle-remains-unbroken> [accessed: 8 X 2017].

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ W.S. Crotty, *Presidential Assassinations*, “Society” 1998, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 99–107.

countries and during the military conflict. Furthermore as part of Hussein's protection, apart from hiding the actual location, information interference was carried out, in which the main form was to simulate the presence of a protected person in a given location. These activities included the use of doubles, organising sham rides, flights, and stays in a specific location. The mocking involved the implementation of a full range of projects performed during actual visits⁵². Hiding the location of public figures is of particular importance during military conflicts, when warring parties use means of fighting with a high force of destruction, such as bombing by aviation. The time factor will speak for this way of attack, because it takes much more to recognise the forces and means of protection, plan the attack and its organisation than to fly planes to the destination⁵³.

In democratic countries, direct interaction between political leaders and citizens is standard. These leaders take part in events which announcements are made public well in advance. This means that location hiding cannot be fully applied. Nowadays, the effectiveness of this strategy is gradually reduced by constantly developing information systems supporting observation, search and detection, which use, among others, satellites and unmanned aircraft. On the other hand, modern technologies are used to conduct information disruption serving protection of public figures⁵⁴.

Incidentally, the question arises, in the context of discussions in the Polish Parliament and the media discussions on the lack of shelters for civilians in Poland, in what condition are the posts used to direct the defence of the state. It should be believed that these are not objects with the characteristics of monuments, with crank phones and control books containing entries by Russian generals from the Warsaw Pact era.

Accessibility to a public figure is the extent to which a measure can be effectively used to carry out an attack on that person at a given time

⁵² Based on the author's conversation with a former employee of Hussein's residence, Karbala 2003.

⁵³ During World War II, for example, the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Force attempted to kill Hitler by raiding a hotel in Milan where he was supposed to be staying. It is also known that the British Special Operations Executive planned "to raze the shelter of Hitler in Berchtesgaden" (operation "Hellhound"). From: P. Hoffmann, *Osobista ochrona Hitlera* (Eng. Hitler's personal security), Warszawa 2012, pp. 442–443.

⁵⁴ More on information disruption see: J. Janczak, *Zakłócanie informacyjne* (Eng. Information disruption), Warszawa 2001, pp. 39–73.

and place. For example, using a gun effectively requires the time it takes to retrieve and aim weapons and the adequate (usually several meters) distance to the target, which should ideally be clearly visible and stay stationary. Meeting these conditions means a high degree of accessibility. It can be reduced by: physical barriers (e.g. in the form of bulletproof shutters), fences and organisational solutions that increase distance; reconnaissance activities (e.g. in the form of observations) carried out against persons at the closest distance in order to capture the moment taking action and limiting the time needed by the attacker for the implementation of subsequent activities; preventive checking of people who are to be near a protected person, carried out, for example, using a metal detector to find weapons. When analysing the accessibility in relation to a specific time and place, the entire spectrum of means that can be used to carry out the attack must be taken into account. On the basis of the conclusions of such an analysis, appropriate forms, methods and means of protection are selected, which are then integrated into accessibility reduction strategy. At the same time, the attackers are developing their own counterstrategies. The activities of both parties are greatly influenced by technological development, which causes, among others, that the already long list of funds used to carry out attacks is lengthening. Assassins, especially those from terrorist organisations and special services, eagerly reach for new technical solutions, skilfully adapting them to their needs⁵⁵. New measures and their creative use by terrorist organisations (such as bombs placed in the final section of the digestive tract or in underwear) can be a big challenge for security services⁵⁶.

Genetic weapons are worth mentioning. Although its use has not been documented, this combining nanotechnology, computing power and synthetic biology with artificial intelligence and robotics, you can imagine the future in which it will be possible to produce and deliver “smart germs”

⁵⁵ An interesting example is the arrest by the FBI of two men who planned to carry out an assassination of the U.S. president using a remote-controlled X-ray emitter installed on a truck. Investigators at the FBI have determined that the use of this type of technology on humans causes death, and the symptoms of radiation appear only after some time. See: *FBI foils plot to build strange X-Ray weapon. Possibly targeting president Obama*, ABC News, 19 VI 2013, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/fbi-foils-plot-build-strange-ray-weapon-possibly/story?id=19440343> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

⁵⁶ J. Winter, S. Weinberger, *Al Qaeda claims new butt bomb*, The Intercept, 25 XII 2014, <https://theintercept.com/2014/12/25/al-qaeda-claims-perfected-hidden-bomb/> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

anytime and anywhere⁵⁷. To develop personalised biological weapons, it is necessary to obtain living cells from the target. The development of the molecular profile of these cells allows for the design, creation and testing of pathogens. The use of this type of weapon is practically impossible to detect – viruses have neither taste nor smell and can be easily sprayed in the air. If such a virus attacked only the DNA of the indicated person, then no one else would get sick. Genetic weapons can be designed to start working after a few months or years. The effects of its action – disease or death – would be associated with natural causes⁵⁸.

Such risks are taken into account by the protection of the President of the United States. Protection measures also include protecting their DNA. A group of soldiers take care to sterilise or destroy all things touched by the leader of the state. The idea is that their cells do not fall into the hands of people capable of producing a virus that can attack them⁵⁹. Leaders of other countries carry their own toilets or put on toilet bowls foil bags that capture everything that can be a carrier of information about the state of their body.

It is estimated that most terrorist organisations probably do not currently have the resources or ability to design and use genetic weapons⁶⁰.

Conclusion 6. Analysis of accessibility in relation to a specific time and place is an essential element of protective activities from the point of view of their effectiveness and optimal use of resources.

⁵⁷ Y. Biberman, *The Technologies and International Politics of Genetic Warfare*, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-15_Issue-3/Biberman.pdf, pp. 6–33 [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

⁵⁸ A. Hessel, M. Goodman, S. Kotler, *Hacking the President's DNA*, *The Atlantic*, November 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/11/hacking-the-presidentsdna/309147/> [accessed: 24 VI 2024]; S. Liberatore, *China's spy agency claims 'gene weapons' that target specific races are being developed by "certain" countries in eerie warning*, *Mail Online*, 31 X 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-12694501/Chinas-spy-agencyclaims-gene-weapons-target-specific-races-developed-certain-countries-eerie-warning.html> [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

⁵⁹ R. Kessler, *In the President's Secret Service: Behind the Scenes with Agents in the Line of Fire and the Presidents They Protect*, Crown Archetype 2009, pp. 22–30.

⁶⁰ E.R. Troxel, *Genetically Targeted Bioweapons*, *Academia*, 25 IV 2016, https://www.academia.edu/42155090/Genetically_Targeted_Bioweapons, pp. 20–21 [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

Security management of the most important people in the country in the light of the adaptive model of the decision-making cycle

In research in the field of security sciences, especially in relation to issues related to state security, the achievements of management sciences are used⁶¹. Such a combination results both from the contemporary dimension of threats, crises and risk factors, requiring a holistic approach to cause and effect relationships, as well as from the need to build adequate security systems, which, due to their complexity, require management. Moreover, as Paweł Tyrała rightly points out, security is such an important element of social life that it cannot be left to an intuitive action based on trial and error. It is subject to the laws of praxeology, that is associated with causal actions⁶².

Taking into account the considerations made so far, it must be stated, that the security management of the most important people in the country is a process carried out as part of activities taking into account the resources of protective formations. It is to ensure the identification and elimination of threats, the use of emerging opportunities and efficient (effective, economic and beneficial) performance by these formations of all functions necessary to maintain optimal safety of the protected person.

In managing the security of the most important people in the country the external and internal conditions for the functioning of security services should be taken into account, that is, the sum of elements that may affect decisions and the effectiveness of their operation. It is worth noting that there is no reliable protection for such people⁶³. The goal should be to ensure their safety at the optimal level. The main task is therefore to minimise the risk of an attack on a protected person as far as the various circumstances allow. This problem was recognised by, among others, Warren Commission set up to investigate the causes of the assassination

⁶¹ A. Dawidczyk, J. Gryz, S. Koziej, *Zarządzanie strategiczne bezpieczeństwem* (Eng. Strategic security management), Łódź 2006; M.Z. Kulisz, *Zarządzanie strategiczne bezpieczeństwem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Eng. Strategic security management of the Republic of Poland), doctoral dissertation, Warszawa 2011.

⁶² P. Tyrała, *Refleksja nad teorią i praktyką bezpieczeństwa* (Eng. Reflection on security theory and practice), in: *Zarządzanie bezpieczeństwem – wyzwania XXI wieku* (Eng. Security management – challenges of the 21st century), M. Lisiecki (ed.), Warszawa 2008, pp. 43–46.

⁶³ T.A. Taylor, *Dodging Bullets. A Strategic Guide to World-Class Protection*, University of North Florida 2002, p. 27.

of John F. Kennedy. In the conclusions of the Commission's report, it was stated, among others, that:

(...) the president's many responsibilities require frequent journeys to all parts of the United States and abroad. Because of their great responsibilities, presidents can never be protected against every potential danger. The security responsibilities of the Secret Service vary depending on the activity and nature of the president's office, as well as his willingness to comply with the steps taken to ensure his safety. In assessing the activities of the secret service, it must be understood that it has to take these limitations into account when fulfilling its duties⁶⁴.

Management is decision making. In the opinion of Boleslaw Kuc, management is (...) *deciding what needs to be done, and then implementing it thanks to the effective use of resources*. From a practical point of view, management is a process that consists of logical and rational decision-making and problem-solving actions as well as actions that are the result of judgment, taken intuitively. In practice, management can therefore be a science, but also an art⁶⁵.

The decision-making process is closely linked to the information system. Without the necessary information, fully rational decisions cannot be made. The quality of the decision-making process depends on the characteristics of the decision-maker. The basis for the action of any such person is the resource of his knowledge, as well as the ability to use it. Only a few are characterised by above-average intuition and imagination⁶⁶.

The considerations so far regarding the security services' use of accessibility limitation strategies and the conditions of the security environment shaped by a complex reality that is uncertain, changing and unpredictable, provide a basis for identifying the requirements for managing the security of the state's most important persons. It appears

⁶⁴ Quoted after J. Kolczyński, Z. Wiktor, *Raport Komisji Warrena. Fakty i opinie* (Eng. Warren Commission Report. Facts and opinions), Warszawa 1966, p. 55.

⁶⁵ B.R. Kuc, *Zarządzanie doskonałe. Poszukiwanie przenikliwości* (Eng. Excellent management. Searching for perspicacity), Issue 3, Warszawa 2008, pp. 64–66.

⁶⁶ B.R. Kuc, M. Żemigala, *Menedżer nowych czasów. Najlepsze metody i narzędzia zarządzania* (Eng. Manager of the new times. Best management methods and tools), Warszawa–Łódź 2010, p. 9.

that the decision-making process at the heart of this management can be based on a repetitive cycle whereby:

- constant observation of the dynamically changing environment is carried out,
- the information is analysed to synthesise the premises to action,
- a conscious decision to choose the variant of action is made,
- a conscious action is taken, the effects of which are again the subject of observation.

The decision-making process based on this cycle is to ensure understanding of the surrounding reality, identification of challenges, opportunities and threats, and shaping the desired security states.

The above concept refers to the essence of the idea of John Boyd, presented in simplified terms as a model of the OODA cycle (Observation-Orientation-Decision-Action), also called the Boyd cycle (Figure 1).

In the work entitled *Patterns of Conflict*⁶⁷ the author explains that the observation is feeling yourself and the world around you. Orientation is a complex set of – filters of genetic heritage, cultural conditioning, personal experience and decision-making knowledge. The decision is a review of alternative variants of action and a choice of the one preferred as a hypothesis to be tested. The last element is an action that tests the decision made through its implementation⁶⁸.

The OODA “Loop sketch” shows the approach of its creator to the process of individual and organisational adaptation, but goes beyond the specificity of tactics and strategy in the military sense. Boyd, summing up his considerations, stated that: (...) *the key statements, OODA loop sketch, and related insights represent an evolving, open-ended, far from equilibrium process of self-organisation, emergence, and natural selection*⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ J. Boyd, *Patterns of Conflict*, <https://www.danford.net/boyd/patterns.pdf>, typescript, pp. 5–39 [accessed: 24 VI 2024].

⁶⁸ F. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War The Strategic Theory of John Boyd*, Eburon Academic Publishers 2005, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁹ J. Boyd, *The Essence of Winning and Losing...*, p. 4 [accessed: 25 VI 2024].

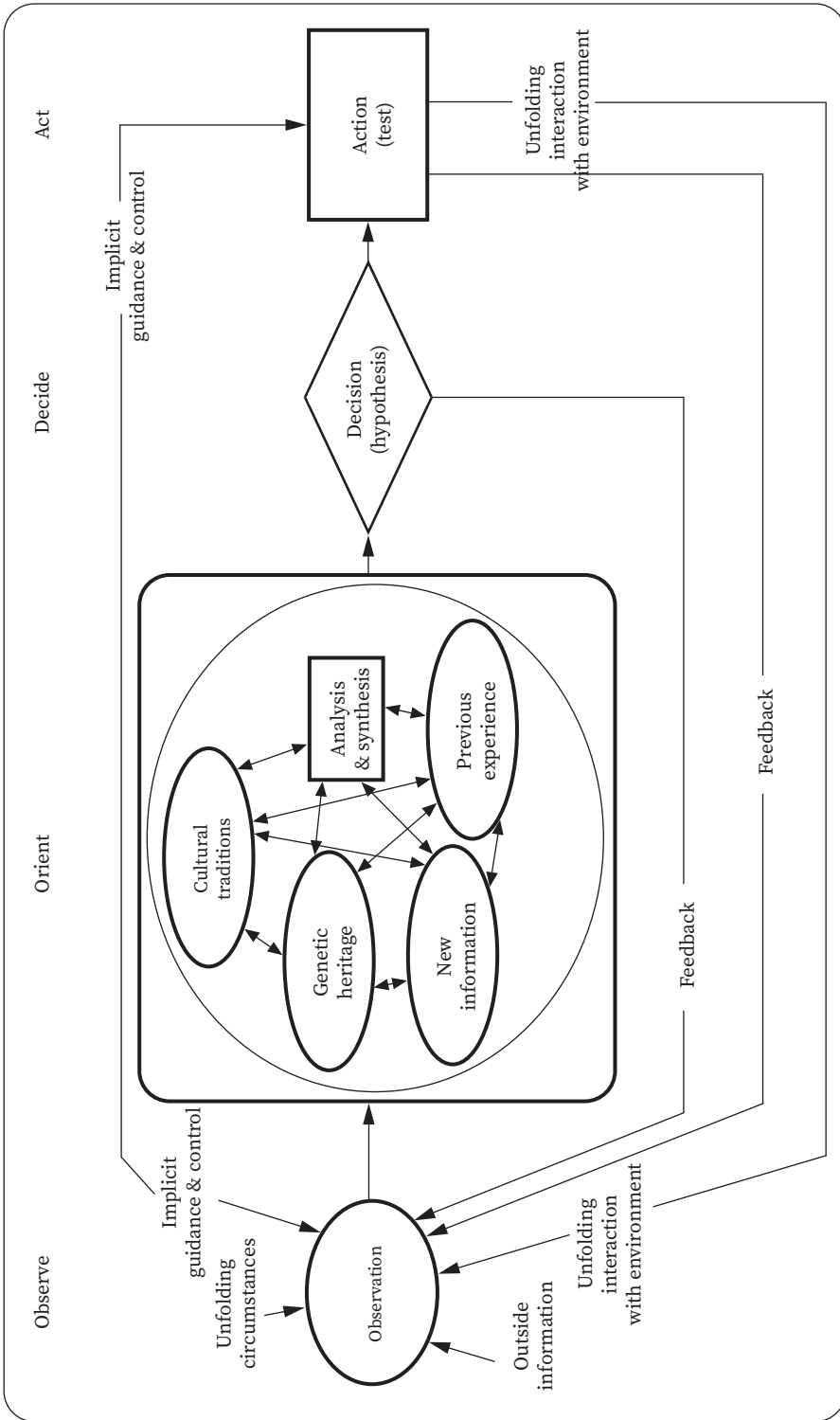


Figure 1. The adaptive cycle of decision-making model by John Boyd (The OODA Loop).

Source: own elaboration based on: J. Boyd, *The Essence of Winning and Losing*, https://slightyeastofnew.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/essence_of_winning_losing.pdf, p. 3 [accessed: 25 VI 2024].

The theory deals with the interaction of mental processes, anticipation and feedback, about learning and adaptation, and about the consequences of not learning or limiting efforts. Boyd argued that adaptation takes place in various time dimensions, and he therefore developed a view of what it means and what is necessary for it at each level. In general terms, adaptability requires maintaining a minimum level of freedom of action at each level of the organisation and a variety of options for future activities so that they can respond in a timely manner to changes in the environment. On the one hand, it is necessary to divide the organisation into different levels and subsystems with orientation models and response options, on the other hand, it is necessary to maintain coherence of activities and objectives, i.e. to maintain appropriate connections between levels and subsystems. Furthermore, the system must operate within explicit and implicit guidelines. In this way, it can survive and thrive in the face of complex change and uncertainty.

Applying this to the security system of the most important persons in the state, it can be pointed out that it should have the capacity to adapt to changes in the security environment, give the required freedom of action at different organisational levels, and its different actors should have their own observation and orientation models and response options. It should be the task of the administrative structures in this system to guarantee the coherence of actions and objectives⁷⁰.

It seems that Boyd's model of the adaptive decision-making cycle can also be adapted to the operational and tactical level of security operations carried out by security services. These services would apply the Boyd's cycle entering the decision-making cycle of the assassins. Observation would ensure the detection of actions leading to the assassination, e.g. observation of protected persons and objects. Orientation would allow the correct interpretation of the phenomena and events observed in the environment, and would subsequently indicate options for adequate responses to be triggered (e.g. preventive actions).

In my opinion, the strategy of limiting accessibility to the protected person can be implemented through the appropriate integration of four elements: information management, knowledge management, the Boyd's cycle and network-centrism.

⁷⁰ J. Cymerski, *Współczesna formacja ochronna wobec zagrożeń terrorystycznych* (Eng. Contemporary security formation in the face of terrorist threats), Warszawa 2023, pp. 284–289.

Conclusion 7. The management of the security of the most important persons in the state has to take into account complex external and internal circumstances, the personal circumstances of the decision-makers, the extent of information available and organisational circumstances.

Summary

In the VUCA⁷¹ world, the security management of the state's most important persons can be based on a strategy of limiting accessibility or hiding locations (in extraordinary threat situations) and a vision⁷² of the security services able to respond to changing conditions in a way that is consistent with a predefined concept and accepted objectives.

The challenge will always remain to obtain the information necessary in the decision-making process for protective measures. Therefore, in the first instance, it is important to demonstrate understanding of the difficulties involved in acquiring information and building communication competence both at the different levels of the protection service concerned and between the actors that make up the system for protecting the most important people in the country. It now seems necessary to apply a network-centric approach to this area of cooperation, based on the requirement for fast, accessible and secure information exchange. The answer to complexity may lie in a clear operating system to identify priority processes, tasks and resources to ensure security in a chaotic situation. Finally, a prerequisite for surviving and thriving in a non-linear world is adaptation to changes in the security environment⁷³.

I am aware that the subject of the security of the most important persons in the state is multifaceted and much more complex than it has

⁷¹ VUCA - acronym (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), which was first used in 1987 at the United States Army War College to describe the post-Cold War geopolitical situation. It represents a concept describing an unstable, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. The term VUCA has, years later, become so universal that it now functions not only in the military, but also in the world of corporate leadership and politics.

⁷² Bob Johansen of the Institute for the Future in Silicon Valley recommends that organisations acquire a set of management competencies termed "VUCA Prime": *Vision, Understanding, Clarity* and *Agility* in response to VUCA. See: B. Johansen, *The New Leadership Literacies: Thriving in a Future of Extreme Disruption and Distributed Everything*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers 2017.

⁷³ Bob Johansen's model uses the term *agility*. For the purposes of this essay, the author proposes *adaptation*.

been possible to outline using major simplifications. However, I hope that the conclusions presented will be critically evaluated and become a starting point for a discussion on the resilience of state structures.

Marcin Lipka, PhD

Doctor of social sciences in the discipline of defence sciences. Expert of the Research Center on Social and Economic Risks at Collegium Civitas. Former officer of Special Branch of the Military Police and the Government Protection Bureau. Manager with many years of professional experience in corporate security structures in the telecommunications and energy sectors. He specialises in the management of areas related to: business continuity, physical and technical security, defence and national security duties, emergency situations. His research interests focus on the resilience of state and corporate structures as well as analysis of competing hypotheses.

Contact: m lipka@civitas.edu.pl