OPERATIVE GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF PLACES OF WORSHIP FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS

A new approach toward security design of sensitive buildings

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This thesis was accomplished for the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (I.A.S.S.P) in Milan (Italy) and it earned the author the certificate of Independent PhD (Libero dottorato di ricerca privato).
The original idea was submitted in September 2015, and the project started in October 2015. The participation to the IASSP program was inserted within the graduate school program of the doctoral studies at TU Delft University.The project ended in February 2017.
The project was presented at the Italian Parliament in Rome on 10th April 2017.
The supervisors committee was composed by: A. Politi, A.Tofalo, I. Rizzi, M.G. Alonzi.

1 An Overview on the Project

The present thesis is aimed at defining operative guidelines devoted to the prevention and limitation of disastrous consequences for man's life and property in case of Islamic terrorist attacks perpetrated in places of worship.
These guidelines are meant to be applied by governs of Western societies at different levels of spatial planning, with particular reference to the development of urban security plans.

The guidelines are based on the study of significant patterns emerged from the statistical elaboration of a database, created collecting in parametrized form the information concerning one hundred and two terrorist attacks perpetrated against Churches or Synagogues in the world between 2001 and 2015.
The list of attacks, located in African and Asian countries [1] are considered as a reliable reference in case of attacks perpetrated in all the Western countries of the world [2].

The necessity for this project is heading within the recognized vulnerability factor that the Italian religious and artistic cultural heritage would represent [3] with reference to a hypothesized escalation of the terrorist treat in Europe.
In particular, among European symbols of civilization, Catholic Churches in Italy are thought to represent a particularly attractive target for Islamic terrorism, as unfortunately confirmed while this thesis was being redacted [4, 5].
In fact, with respect to the current long lasting harsh warfare [6], it is author's belief that despite the valuable Intelligence and normative effort [7], it is not possible to totally prevent terrorist attacks from happening [8, 9].

Instead, security from terrorism risk in modern society will be based on the capability of translating the projection in the future of the current risks comprehension, in turn based on the evidence of near past or ongoing tendencies, into economically and socially sustainable protective measures [10, 11].
In this sense, the present thesis is meant to achieve the purpose through a new decodification paradigm of terrorist treat toward modern societies, to be declined as a safety designing tool of city's strategical buildings, within the purpose of achieving the same level of security confidence the society guarantees for dwellings subjected to dynamic loadings [12, 13].
Unfortunately, the recent terrorist attacks in Europe have confirmed the lack of preparation of western societies to face terrorism [14]. If a formal definition does not exist yet [15], its operative interpretation represents an even more urgent challenge to be accomplished in the near future [16].

The present thesis is written in English and it consists of two parts.
The first part is devoted at providing a quali-quantitative assessment of the Islamic terrorist treat towards places of worship.
The second section develops operative guidelines consistently with the treat scenarios inferred in Part I.
Due to reasons of public interest, the first part of the thesis was presented in advance on 30$^{\text{th}}$ September 2016 at the Italian Parliament in Rome (Aula dei Gruppi Parlamentari).