

Technical means of Russian customs control – international terrorism counteraction tool

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Abstract. In the article, through the prism of basic principles of state policy of modern Russian state in combating terrorist and extremist manifestations, technical means of control used by customs authorities as prevention and counteraction to terrorism and extremism in the territory of the Russian Federation are revealed. The role and importance of technical means of customs control, their diversity depending on the search methods used, where special attention is paid to technical means of detecting explosive devices, explosives, and explosive objects, are shown based on the regulatory framework. The authors conclude that the customs service of Russia, being one of the largest in the world, along with the many tasks of national importance set to prevent the growth of violations in the field of customs legislation, solves such a national problem, as countering terrorist and extremist activities of the criminal world, which is largely facilitated by modern technical means of customs control.

Keywords: customs service, explosive objects

1 Introduction

International terrorism, which has transformed over time and has become increasingly diverse (from political, criminal, religious, national, to environmental and informational), has become a clear reality of modern life. Being a global world problem, carrying in its actions a direct threat to the security of both entire states and peoples, and directly to specific individuals, the fight against international terrorism and extremism is becoming one of the most important tasks of law enforcement agencies of all civilized states. Modern terrorism and extremism, which carry the ideology of violence and maximally involve the young generation in their activities (including through the Internet), are aimed at destroying traditional values.

Back in 1998, the Federal Law “On combating terrorism” [1] (repealed on 01.01.2007 as a result of the adoption on 06.03.2006 of the Federal Law “On countering terrorism” [2]) consolidated the provision that along with such Russian state bodies as the Federal Security

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Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Federal Security Service, the Ministry of Defense, the Federal Border Service [1], the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation stands in the way of preventing and countering terrorist crimes, by virtue of a number of its competence. Subparagraph 7 of paragraph 2 of Article 254 of Federal Law No. 289 of 03.08.2018, revealing the principles of activity, functions, and tasks of customs authorities of the Russian state, among several most important tasks, clearly indicates the task of customs authorities to provide “assistance in combating ... international terrorism and extremism...” [3].

Undermining the foundations of international stability, these phenomena (terrorism and extremism), closely intertwined with organized crime, are characterized by a high degree of organization and considerable technical equipment. In this regard, government agencies are forced to constantly modernize and introduce fundamentally new means of technical control to ensure a high quality of effective customs control at state border crossings. It is well known that customs, which ensures the licensing procedure for import and export of goods and the payment of customs duties and taxes on export and import of goods to the country’s state budget, is one of the most profitable services for the modern Russian state. A variety of modernized customs technologies, the possibility of which emerged primarily due to the rapid development of technology in modern science and technology in the late 20th – early 21st centuries, brought the quality of customs control to a completely new competitive level.

2 Methods

Theoretically significant for this article were systemic and institutional approaches, reflecting the application by customs officials of the best options for using special technologies during customs control. In preparing the article, the authors used general and special scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, generalization, induction, deduction, comparative-historical and comparative-legal, and logical research methods). The integrated use of diverse methods allowed the authors of the article to investigate the tasks of countering international terrorism and extremism, facing the customs authorities of the Russian state, through the study of the use of modern special technologies in customs control to detect, identify, recognize and disarm explosive devices, explosives, and explosive objects.

3 Results

The views of many modern Russian and foreign scientists in the field of history, philosophy, religious studies, politics, sociology, law, economics, information technology, etc., are drawn to the current problems of combating international terrorism and extremism. The authors’ conceptual approaches to the study of these phenomena in the scientific world, for all their multidirectional and diverse nature, have a general steady tendency to condemn and firmly reject actions that are in any way terrorist-extremist in nature [4-9].

In the course of the study of the stated problematic issues concerning the theoretical and practical aspects of the use of technical means by the customs authorities of Russia in carrying out operational diagnostics of explosives, extensive material of a specialized scientific and educational nature was studied. In the authors’ opinion, the works that consider the effect and scope of application concerning explosives of such modern technical means of customs control as KERBER PIDD, KOLIBRI DVU, YANTAR DRM deserve special attention [10]; revealing organizational, economic, and legal aspects of the

use of technical means [11]; optimizing their nomenclature and quantity [12]; efficiency of application based on perspective innovation and information technologies [13].

4 Discussion

The Russian Federation, whose policy is aimed at protecting its national priorities both in the international political arena and domestically, enshrines the main ideas and fundamental principles of suppression of terrorist and extremist activity through the adoption, first and foremost, of a legislative framework. Thus, approved on 02.07.2021 by the President of the Russian Federation, the National Security Strategy of Russia until 2030 (this version of the Strategy is an updated edition of an earlier document adopted on 31.12.2015. “On the national security strategy of the Russian Federation [14]), in Section II “Russia in the modern world: trends and opportunities” paragraph 18 clearly states that “... the use of international double standards policy hinders the effectiveness of ... combating terrorism, extremism ...” [15].

Fundamental principles of the state policy of modern Russian state in the field of combating extremist manifestations are laid down in the Strategy to counter extremism in the Russian Federation until 2025 (approved by Presidential Decree of 29.05.2020) [16], the main content of which is also aimed at specifying the provisions of federal legislation in the sphere of combating extremism, namely the Federal law of 25.07.2002. “On countering extremist activity” [17] and the corresponding Decree of the Government of Russia No. 333 from 04.05.2008 [18]. Although the Strategies mentioned above act primarily as documents of strategic planning, their leading role is obvious, as they are a universal legal instrument in implementing state policy in preventing and combating crimes of terrorist and extremist nature.

Even though the territorial redistribution of the world has already been accomplished, the manifestation of aggressive extremist policies is still inherent in some countries. For example, Ukraine, territorially neighboring with the Russian Federation, after the collapse of the USSR, numerous personnel changes within the Ukrainian state, division of state property, coming to power of pro-Western politicians negatively disposed towards Russia, conducts active extremist and terrorist activity in the territories bordering with the Russian state [19, 20]. The crisis Russian-Ukrainian relations, which have a relatively short historical period, according to T. V. Drobysheva, which seem to be “a logical continuation of the Third Ruin (the period after the collapse of the USSR)” [21], today have led to the aggravation of the confrontation of political elites and an open conflict of “East-West” interests.

The list of technical means used by the customs authorities of Russia and the procedure for their use at the legislative level are enshrined in the relevant legal acts – Orders of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation from 01.03.2019, No. 33n [22] and No. 34n [23]. The above-mentioned normative legal acts, revealing the variety of technical means, prescribe the use of the following technical instruments aimed and also used for the detection of terrorist and extremist manifestations – X-ray inspection equipment, inspection, and examination complexes, search equipment (from metal detectors, mirrors, endoscopes, probes, magnifiers, and flashlights, to inspection tools), subsurface sounding devices, technical and chemical means of identification, technical means of documenting and monitoring audio and video media, etc. The import substitution policy pursued by the Russian Federation in connection with the imposition of a wide range of sanctions against our state since 2014 has necessitated the development of Russian analogs of components of technical means of customs control.

The technical means used at customs posts to inspect persons and goods crossing the borders of the Russian state are quite diverse. They aim to identify customs documents and

customs clearance facilities, obtain information on the quantity and composition of goods their physical and chemical properties, and detect violations of a wide range of customs regulations by individuals and legal entities. However, according to the authors, among all this variety of customs control tools, technical means aimed at countering terrorist and extremist threats in terms of detecting explosive devices and items stand apart.

Today, used and known explosives (both the chemical compounds and their mixtures) include a fairly wide range of substances, where their components remain TNT, nitroglycerin, ammonium nitrate, tetrazole, octogens, hexogen and pentaerythritetranitrate (TEN), etc. [10]. In this regard, it is necessary to outline their imperative action based on applying gas chromatography, spectrophotometry, nuclear quadrupole resonance, and many other physicochemical principles. It is important to note that extensive methods of searching for explosives go far beyond the above principles, as customs authorities also use such search methods as metal detectors, non-linear locators, X-ray-TV units, gas analysis devices, chromatography columns, portable detectors (used for research, including in customs laboratories), stationary type analyzers, drift spectrometers, laser methods, etc.

The unconditional advantages of most modern scientific-engineering technical foreign and Russian developments include their high reliability of detection even without the penetration of the object; the ability to identify types of explosives; the use of devices under low and high-temperature conditions, complex climatic and extreme conditions; the long-term (almost unlimited) possibility of application; increased sensitivity of devices; generally low power consumption; low weight and dimensions; determination of the presence of explosives in the shortest (up to seconds or minutes) time; ability to document the results of their tasks and get full information about the object. It is advisable to pay attention to the fact that suspected objects inspected for explosives by inspection equipment, subjected to thorough inspection by customs authorities, are often associated with crimes in the field of illegal arms trafficking, the movement across the customs border of the country of drugs, psychotropic and ozone-depleting substances.

5 Conclusion

Modern inspection equipment certainly improves the efficiency of customs control by customs authorities of the Russian Federation, up to the prevention of terrorist threats and disasters from environmental to anthropogenic. As practice shows, the special technologies created and constantly improved by customs control, along with other institutions, currently sufficiently ensure the economic security of the Russian state. The constant increase in passengers, transport, and cargo traffic at the customs border of the Russian state in connection with the expansion of foreign trade turnover of the country, leads to a continuous increase in the need to use modern technology by customs authorities. The very use of technical means certainly simplifies customs control procedures, growth, and intensification of customs officers' performance, contributing to the growth of customs potential for the implementation of opportunities for the growth of foreign economic activity of the Russian Federation.

Although there is currently no universal method of preventing and countering terrorist and extremist threats, modern customs control technologies used in practice by the customs authorities of the Russian Federation are designed to facilitate and accelerate the search for explosives, devices, and explosive objects transported across the customs border of the Russian state, the comprehensive application of both detection methods and a wide range of technical devices aimed at neutralizing explosive objects and materials play a defining role in the work of customs authorities in combating international terrorism and extremism.

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