

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY, A NATIONAL SECURITY DIMENSION

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Abstract: *In the paper, the author approaches a topical issue, namely the issue of the environmental security as a dimension of the state's national security. Starting from a distinct approach of the security concept, in general, and of the national security as a component of the global security, the author draws attention to the existence of a need, of a friendly resource provider environment, as well as for the man as a part of the bios and of the globally ecosystem, an imperative condition of a person's development and affirmation.*

In the author's opinion, the environment represents a potential source of various crises threatening the status of national / regional / global security, as global changes, resources mitigation, inequality in access to resources, or the failure of states to respond to potential crises may lead to conflicts, both in the internal plan but also between countries. The environmental security addresses interdisciplinary concepts specific to fields such as security or the environment, referring mainly to environmental security issues caused by the human society, as well as to the security issues generated by the environment of societies. The author presents, at the same time, the national legislative framework in the field that confers to the security of the environment, the national security dimension.

Concluding, the security of individuals and / or of human communities implies nowadays an appropriate security of the environment, that seeks to preserve the ecological conditions / or the environmental factors required for the survival, development and affirmation of human communities.

Keywords: security, environment, strategy, economy, climate, risk, global.

1.Introduction

The acceleration of the industrialization process from the end of the 20th century and from the 21st century, based in particular on the use of fossil fuels, has led, besides the beneficial effects manifested in the development of the quality of life, to increased carbon emissions and, implicitly, damages to the environment. Consequently, the human society's work in the field of industry must be shifted to another model of economic development, that could offer the possibility of diminishing the impact on the environment, ignoring this problem could lead to serious consequences at local, national, regional or global level.

Given the importance of the natural environment for the economy, as a resource provider, but also for man, as a part of the global bios and ecosystem, it has become the subject of security strategies regarding climate changes and the economic growth based on low-carbon emissions.

We are currently witnessing the emergence of some risks that are no longer related to classical security, but, by extension, they become related to the existence of human society, and therefore the protection of the environmental security must be achieved, both in terms of the consequences of climate changes and of the conflicts / access generated by the access to vital human resources. In this context, the security agenda of most international actors includes a distinct concern over the risks and vulnerabilities specific to the current stage, including environmental degradation (earthquakes, floods, climate warming, excessive pollution, desertification, deforestation), risks which have become the subject of security strategies.

2.The security concept. The national security dimension.

Conceptually, the term of “security” can be generic equivalent to the phrase “absence

of danger," and the term of "insecurity" with the phrase "*presence of danger*" [1]. Security is essential to the existence of individuals, of collectivities and states, which is why the important areas of manifestation of the individual behavior, and of the societal one, in general, must be characterized by their security status. The concept defines / characterizes the circumstance or context in which a person or a group of persons, found in a well-defined form of organization, as a result of some measures taken individually or in co-operation with other actors, are guaranteed that their existence and integrity and their fundamental interests are not affected or endangered. Located at all levels of social organization (individual / group / state / alliances), and manifesting itself socially, economically and politically, security gains valency only if it relates to fundamental national interests, in the case of national security of a state, at the assurance of peace, and in the case of international security, human rights and fundamental freedoms, if we relate to the individual's security. [4]

Seen from a global perspective, security represents a relationship/connection between safety, balance and stability that aims to prevent armed conflicts and develop inter-state co-operation, and it is characterized as the state of the international system that gives every national state a guarantee that it is sheltered from possible aggressions or threats of force, which would affect its fundamental values, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In the context of globalization, international security can no longer relate only to the military capacity and capability, but also to the economic, social, ecological, cultural, and demographic environment. At the same time, global security assures to every state the possibility to act freely to promote its own interests, respecting international norms.

Globally, the security environment is, currently, characterized by a dynamic evolution that results in a transformation reflected on the one hand in accentuating the interdependencies of the system of international relations, and on the other hand in the difficulty of defining the classical risks and threats of the asymmetric / hybrid ones. The high degree of uncertainty that characterizes developments in the security environment, requires new ways of action, based on a medium and long-term strategic vision. The current security architecture highlights the existence of unprecedented security issues, the unconventional risks such as climate change, food crisis, demographic growth pandemics, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and poverty, continue to increasingly influence national, european and international stability and security. [3]

The concept of national security is intended to define the fundamental national interests of a state, that must be defended and promoted, such as the institutions, resources, ways and strategies of preserving these interests against threats and risks of any kind. National security is carried out through specialized institutions of the state, which is conceived and promoted through its security policy as part of the general state policy, that it carries out both internally and externally. Thus, it is the state that sets the objectives of national security policy in order to promote the fundamental national interests, and the areas that are priority in this policy.

Because it manifests in all areas of activity: political, economic, demographic, cultural, social, ecological and at all levels of individual or collective organization - group, national, zonal, continental and global - national security represents / characterizes the state in which the country finds itself so that it can develop freely, according to its own aspirations, and act unrestrictedly to promote national interests internally and internationally. [8]

3. Securing the environment, an integral part of national security.

Environmental security has become, an important dimension of national security since

1990, as one of the major threats to human civilization is the environmental degradation generated by industrial, agricultural, nuclear, chemical, biological activities. Natural disasters - earthquakes, droughts, hurricanes, floods, desertification, sea level rise, volcanic eruptions, nuclear disasters, etc. - can seriously affect people's lives and health, can cause immense damage to the economy at national and international levels and seriously destabilize ecological and biological balances. [2]

In this context, it can be said that environmental security is found in interdependence with the other components of national security, acting on each other, so that social, economic and political stability are directly influenced by the state of the environment.

National security implies setting up a strategy or course of action that must prevent / address potential risks and threats to the interests of the state, while environmental security, as a national security component or dimension, seeks to minimize environmental risks and vulnerabilities. The environmental security interdisciplinary approaches concepts specific to the the areas of security and environment, mainly referring to environmental security issues caused by the human society, but also to security issues generated by the environment of the human society. The environment is a potential source of the crises threatening the national security, as global change, resource mitigation, inequality of access to resources, and the different capabilities of states to respond to potential crises due to environmental problems are likely to trigger conflicts at internal level or between different states. The unpredictable consequences of global environmental crises have prompted more and more states to treat environmental protection as a dimension of national security. In conclusion, we can appreciate that environmental security is an integral part / dimension of the national security of any state.[2].

In Romania, national security is the fundamental condition of the existence of the nation and of the Romanian state, and it has as a reference area the national values, interests and needs and it is carried out in the context of regional, Euro-Atlantic and global security [6].

The most eloquent way to apply the state security concept is the national security strategy, which sets political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural directions, the purpose of the strategy aiming at ensuring citizens' safety, community security, guaranteeing the state of security internally, as a whole, and to prevent and counteract the dangers generated by developments in the international environment.

In Romania, these strategies were conceived after 1990, the first document called the *Integrated Concept on National Security of Romania*, elaborated in 1993, remaining at the stage of the project, provides for the first time the fundamental national interests of Romania, including the protection of the environment, and the natural conditions necessary for human existence.

Later, in 1999, the *National Security Strategy of Romania* was implemented. *Democratic Stability, Sustainable Economic Development and Euro-Atlantic Integration*, where environmental damage was predicted for the first time.

The issue of environmental security has also been addressed in the *Romanian Security Strategy – European Romania, Euro-Atlantic Romania: for a better life in a democratic, safer and prosperous country* - approved in 2007, which constituted a necessity of harmonizing the national strategic objectives with the global strategic changes and with the new NATO status of Romania, awaiting accession to the European Union (EU) in 2007. The document states that national security can be endangered by a series of serious phenomena, geophysical, meteo-climatic or associated, coming from the environment or reflecting its degradation. These include: natural catastrophes or other serious climatic events, industrial or

environmental disasters resulting in large losses of human life, substantial disruption of economic and social life and serious environmental pollution of the national territory and adjacent regions. [6]

For the period 2015-2019, the *National Defense Strategy of the Country - A Strong Romania in Europe and in the World* - was drawn up - referring to the persistence of social risks, on the ground of some trends such as demographic decline, emigration of the active population, degradation of environmental factors. According to the Strategy, risks with low probability but with major impacts, such as migratory flows generated by natural disasters, pandemics, ecological disasters, remain with interest for national security. Among the main directions and main ways of ensuring the national security provided in the document are the identification and signaling of the dangers, risks and threats to the environment security and, on the other hand, the prevention and counteraction of the risk generators at the address of the environmental security. [5]

The security of the individual, in particular, and of the human communities as a whole, implies an appropriate / optimal security of the environment, which mainly aims at preserving the environmental conditions / environmental factors related to the survival, development and affirmation of human communities. At the same time, the quality of the natural environment, and ecosystems, depends on the quality of people's lives. At a large extent, man must be seen as a component of the natural environment in the sense that it is and will be a product of it. Hence, there is a relationship of interdependence between the security of the environment and human security. The assurance of human security implies the physical and psychological safety of persons, prosperity and economic and social welfare, all of which are achievable by respecting and protecting fundamental rights and freedoms.

In order for an individual community or a group of communities to be lasting and sustainable, and to express their vocation, they must pay more attention to the economic resources / potential of the environment, both in the short term and especially on the term long. The potential of the environment, on the one hand, and its security, on the other hand, are major problems and, at the same time, basic components of the changes, brought by globalization.

Man's brutal intervention on the natural environment in order to exploit its resources has led to an alteration of the fauna and flora, putting in danger, even its existence. Thus, in the last decades, nature has begun to react to the irresponsible actions of man in the pursuit of profit, and their intensity is difficult to manage. The man, part of the bios and part of the global ecosystem, is the only component that can mitigate the effects of its own negative activities on the environment.

It is therefore necessary to continue to apply at national and European level, measures aiming to protect the natural environment, limiting the negative effects of natural disasters and diminishing the consequences of global warming. Therefore, the measures taken to protect the natural environment mean ensuring national security that is conducive to human life and activity.

4.Conclusions

Under the circumstances of contemporary society, when we witness the disharmony between society and nature, it is necessary to form a rational attitude towards natural conditions and economic activity, in order to increase natural wealth without producing pollution.

The degradation of the environment has led to the approach of economic development in a manner that allows the future generations the capability of development to be transferred

to a superior level than the present generation. Combining economic growth with social equity and protecting the environment, for the present and future, is the basis of the new form of sustainable economic development. [7]

Environmental security aims both to protect the population from natural disasters and to limit the deterioration of the environment, which is now the permanent preoccupation of states to develop environmental protection policies.

The environment is an essential element of the existence and development of the human being and is the result of the interferences / interactions of the natural elements - soil, air, water - with elements generated by human activity as a whole, all interacting and influencing the conditions, possibilities and aspirations of developing of the individual and / or of the society.

The man, through his intervention, essentially altered the natural environment, according to his requirements, and he became truly aware of the pollution phenomenon in the last decades of the twentieth century, when the consequences of accelerated industrialization, such as acid rains, the greenhouse effect, serious damage to water and soil quality, thinning of the ozone layer, have appeared, all affecting life itself. These consequences have been aggravated over time by several factors such as urbanization, demographic growth, migration, technical evolution, and consumption growth, which have boosted the destruction of natural balances. The human's finite existence as well as any activity generated by it, is inconceivable outside the environment, the quality of each component of it putting its substantial footprint on the human factor.

Environmental degradation can destabilize societies by reducing economic opportunities, so the environment is the central element for international, European and national security. Therefore, environmental protection is an increasingly important area and concerns the ability of individuals to avoid or to adapt to environmental changes so that the important elements for their well-being are not adversely affected.

In conclusion, we can state that the environment belongs to the globality, to all nations, its degradation goes beyond the conventional national borders, which also demonstrates and requires the cooperation of states in order to find solutions for limiting the risks and vulnerabilities generated by the destruction of the environment.

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