

Theoretical View of Some Current Global Security Challenges

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Abstract: *As the new millennium starts to unfold, we see before us an area of security that has been radically reshaped since the end of the cold war and the end bipolar division of the world. Deepening globalization brings not only a lot of positives, but also a lot of negatives appearing mainly in the form of new asymmetric security threats or risks, so we understand that a real effort will now be required to reappraise the 21st century. Simultaneously, it is clear that, if we want to stabilize security environment, we must look beyond our traditional military philosophy and deal very seriously with new global security challenges.*

Key Words: *Security, challenges, environment, terrorism, weapons, crime.*

1. INTRODUCTION

At the very beginning, it is necessary to point out that the current security challenges and risks in global security environment are of a military and non-military nature; however, the most of them are of a non-military nature. These security challenges and risks are closely interconnected; consequently, the situation in one area can seriously affect the situation in other areas. Simultaneously, most of the current challenges and risks in one region of the world are also common to the adjacent regions, or we could even say that also in many outlying areas. This merely underlines the complexity of the contemporary international security environment. Therefore, a lead item is the notion of “comprehensive security”, which takes into account the full range of direct and indirect security challenges and threats to societies, nations and the international system as a whole. Among today’s most significant global security challenges belong mainly terrorism, organized crime, weapons of mass destruction and proliferation and arms control.

2. TERRORISM

Prior to September 11, 2001, terrorism was only one among a large and growing number of international security concerns. Since then it moved to the centre of concerns of the international community. Terrorism is considered as a hindering force to the development of

liberal, open and democratic societies governed by the rule of law. It is a global threat affecting virtually every country. There is no commonly agreed definition of terrorism. Between the 1930s and the end of the Cold war, over 100 definitions have been published. The total today is no doubt considerably greater. Any definition has to be acceptable by all, but the deep subjectivity of the word explains that no definition has received universal approval thus far. However, some universal norms and characteristics are largely accepted to define terrorism:

- The use of illegal violence or force (today this includes the use of WMD-devices as well);
- It is a non-governmental phenomenon;
- Violence is used against civilians, who are per definition innocent.

Irrational terrorism does not exist: terrorists are always seeking to achieve certain goals; and it is intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, ideological or economical/social. However, the UNSC resolution 1373 adopted soon after 9/11 terrorist attacks implicitly defines terrorism as consisting of terrorist acts irrespective of their causes and goals. Hence, goals and motives of the terrorist cannot justify terrorist acts.

Terrorism is about power, a kind of power that makes change happen in the long term rather than instantly. Terrorism never loses its essential nature, which is the abuse of the innocent in the service of political power. The ingredients of “international terrorism” are: group commitments to international revolution, the willingness of foreign governments and publics to help and the sympathies of Diasporas from populations. The ingredients vary in different phases or waves of international terrorism and do not always mix well.

Contemporary terrorism reveals new trends and dangers, which were tragically demonstrated by the unprecedented attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. Not only did this show the terrorists’ ability and willingness to use new methods of killing and destruction but also that the nature of terrorism is changing in terms of organization and operational approach. Terrorists are organized in dispersed units that are interconnected within networks attuned to the information age.

Religion is a particular part of contemporary terrorism. Religious terrorists feel divinely justified for and entitled to terrorist acts. Therefore they can be more savage, suicidal etc. Islamist terrorism is drawing from a total belief in a theological and absolute truth, which ultimately requires the destruction of non-believers. This then legitimizes the use of violence. The recent emergence of suicide terrorism is also encouraged by religious motives and the recruitment of suicide bombers exploits their poor social-economic outlook. This has introduced mega-terrorism, what makes as many victims as possible.

In this context, a distinction needs to be made between the word “Islamic” and the word “Islamist”. The former signifies religion whereas the latter a political ideology inspired from religion. Although nothing in Islam advocates terrorism even implicitly, small groups of adepts of Islamist ideology resort to terrorist acts. However, it should be kept in mind that other religions have their fundamentalists and terrorists as well.

Efforts by the international community to combat acts of terrorism have led to the conclusion of several multilateral conventions. These conventions are directed at specific types of terrorist conduct such as sabotage and hijacking, attacks on diplomats and hostage taking. They oblige states to prosecute an alleged offender found within their territory or to extradite them. None of the current multilateral anti-terrorism conventions provide for economic or other sanctions against states that assist terrorists or offer them a safe haven. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the international community

realized that terrorism, as a global phenomenon, must be combated in a spirit of solidarity. Following these attacks, NATO invoked for the first time in its history Article 5, its mutual defence clause, declaring the attacks to be an attack against all member countries. This landmark decision was followed by practical measures aimed at assisting the United States. In this context Allies have agreed to take measures, individually and collectively, to expand the options available in the campaign against terrorism.

NATO is currently contributing to the fight against terrorism through military operations in Afghanistan, the Balkans and the Mediterranean and by taking steps to protect its populations and territory against terrorist attacks. The Alliance is also engaged in a far-reaching transformation of its forces and capabilities to better deter and defend against terrorism, and is working closely with partner countries and organizations to ensure broad cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

At the Prague Summit in November 2002, NATO Heads of State and Government endorsed a package of measures to strengthen NATO's capabilities to defend against terrorism, including a military concept for defence against terrorism, a Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) Action Plan for the improvement of civil preparedness against possible attacks on the civilian population with chemical, biological or radiological agents; and measures to strengthen defences against cyber-attacks. They also initiated a Missile Defence feasibility study to examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces and population centres against missile threats.

During the 2004 Istanbul Summit, and gradually also during the next NATO summits, member nations have agreed on an enhanced set of measures to strengthen Allies' individual and collective contribution to the international community's fight against terrorism. These measures include, among others, improved intelligence sharing, assistance in protecting against and dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks including the need to prevent WMD from being acquired by terrorists.

3. ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime is a complex concept that is difficult to grasp and lends itself to many definitions, legal, "criminological" or sociological. The International Secretariat of INTERPOL was the first to define organized crime, at the International Colloquium on Organized Crime held in Saint-Cloud in May 1988, as "any association or group of persons engaging in a continuing illegal activity whose [aim] is to make profits without regard for national frontiers". The United Nations define it as "... a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit." The UN Convention against Trans-national Organized Crime signed in Palermo in December 2000 has adopted the latter definition.

Organized crime could also be described as the governance of the illegal marketplace. At its heart are individual criminals working in networks operating in both the legitimate and illegitimate marketplaces. Their activities may be global but their effect is often local.

Organized crime is manifest and develops in many areas, including:

- Illegal drug production and trafficking;
- Trafficking in people;
- Economic / financial fraud, including money laundering;
- Illegal arms trade;
- Maritime piracy;

- Cyber-crime;
- Environment-related crime, in particular toxic waste dumping;
- Traffic of organs.

Organized crime has grown considerably during the past decade, both in quantity (increased acts of violence and intimidation, cases of fraud and corruption, illegal trafficking and recycling of its products, etc.) and quality (professional, rational and international networks). It has benefited greatly from the globalization of trade and finance, as well as from the mobility of persons and property, the development of instantaneous communication, the new interdependence of nations, the opening up, not to say abandonment, of national frontiers and a measure of loss of sovereignty of States over their own territory. In Europe, in particular, the fall of the "iron curtain" has provided the opportunities to fill the vacuums left in the East by States in the process of radical transformation, while the increase in the rate of European construction has encouraged fraud of all kinds to the detriment of the Community.

The economic scale of crime is impressive: legal drug trafficking alone generates a market of an estimated 0.5 to 1 trillion Euros annually. Annual estimates of money laundering range between 1 and 2 trillion Euros. The large profits made by organized criminal groups, combined with the low risk of perpetrators being arrested and successfully prosecuted, are the key driving factors for organized crime to further develop and to challenge individual states and the international community.

Organized crime is far from being homogeneous. Each country or region has differing concerns, which may depend on the local "consumer needs", criminal traditions, political systems and social attitudes towards crime. In particular, weak states and countries in transition from authoritarian regimes to democracy create opportunities for economic crime and corruption. Views on the national and international security risks posed by international crime vary widely. One school of thought argues that organized crime is about business and might harm the health of a country and its people, but that it does not pose a hard security threat to the state or the international system. Others contend that the linkages between international organized crime networks and militant groups such as terrorists provide the latter with so much military power that these violent actors have the potential to undermine international security and the international community's capability to control it.

What options are available to respond to the challenges posed by organized crime? Given the speed and globalization of communications, which enable criminals to cross borders more easily, there is greater urgency for the international community to cooperate against organized crime. At the international level, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime represents a significant step forward. Its aim is to promote co-operation between signatory countries through encouraging best practices across a range of areas. It has been proven that reliance on law enforcement alone is insufficient and simply changes the pattern of market dominance. Governments and international institutions need to look at the illegal commodities and the market as a whole, considering how to attack the market itself, rather than just relying on legislation.

The question as to whether organized crime is a soft or a hard security risk is perhaps less relevant than the dynamics of its interaction with and its penetration into other strands of international security challenges. The trans-national nature of organized crime calls for effective measures and cooperation not only among the relevant bodies and institutions at the national level but also at the international level in order to achieve successful results.

Human-Trafficking presents itself as an important aspect of organized crime. The Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPAT) was designed by the UN

Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and launched in March 1999. GPAT assists Member States in their efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. It highlights the involvement of organized criminal groups in human trafficking and promotes the development of effective ways of cracking down on perpetrators.

The GPAT overarching objective is to bring to the foreground the involvement of organized criminal groups in human trafficking and to promote the development of effective criminal justice-related responses. As the only entity focusing on the criminal justice element, the GPAT, working through UNODC Crime Program, brings special advantages to the fight against trafficking.

NATO does not step aside. During a one of NATO conferences in 2009, the Secretary General stated that NATO will have to deal with human trafficking and other organized crimes as part of the fight against terrorism. Therefore, a NATO policy paper on combating trafficking in human beings has been developed by NATO in consultation with its partners and nations contributing forces to NATO-led operations. NATO nations, through this policy, committed themselves to ensure implementation of a number of measures envisaged for combating this specific form of organized crime.

4. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) consist of nuclear, biological and chemical arms. The use or threatened use of WMD significantly influenced the security environment of the 20th century. The proliferation of these weapons, as well as delivery of systems, constitutes the most salient risks that menace international peace and security in the 21st century.

4.1 Biological Weapons

Biological weapons (BW) may pose the most significant danger to humanity followed by nuclear arms and chemical weapons. The killing mechanism of biological weapons is disease. Humanity has, so far, been spared the experience of their large-scale lethal power. A few grams of efficiently aerosolized anthrax, for example, could easily kill tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people in densely populated urban areas. The deliberate release of the contagious smallpox virus, which has been eradicated in nature, could kill millions and spread rapidly around the world. BW agents of various types are invisible, odourless and tasteless. The onset of visible symptoms maybe delayed depending on the incubation period of the disease. Even the threat of their use can have highly damaging psychological effects. These features make them especially suited for covert or terrorist attacks resulting in mass casualties. Recent advances in biotechnology, including genetic engineering, may improve biological warfare capabilities through product and process improvements. The latter can lead to larger production batches in shorter times while using smaller equipment, thus making it easier to hide BW programs in legitimate activities. Currently, 16 countries in the Middle East and Asia are conducting BW programs.

4.2 Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons (NW) cause mass destruction in the truest sense. Simply put, they derive their destructive power from a vast release of energy by splitting highly enriched uranium or plutonium atoms. The manufacture of nuclear weapons is extremely expensive, needs profound expertise due to the complex processes involved, the most difficult being the production of highly enriched uranium or plutonium. A potential source of this basic

material is the former Soviet Union, where it is relatively plentiful, the economy is in upheaval, and security provisions are less than optimal. Currently eight states are known to possess these weapons (Great Britain, France, China, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russian Federation and USA) while several others are known to be seeking this capability and at least one (North Korea) has advanced plausible claims to nuclear weapons possession. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, this would be a blatant violation of the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to which Iran is a party.

NATO'S Nuclear Forces played a central role in the Alliance's strategy of flexible response during the cold war. In the new security environment, NATO has radically reduced its reliance on nuclear forces. Its strategy remains one of war prevention, but it is no longer dominated by the possibility of nuclear escalation. Its nuclear forces are no longer targeted against any country, and the circumstances in which their use might have to be contemplated are considered to be extremely remote. NATO's nuclear forces continue to play an essential role in war prevention, but their role is now more fundamentally political, and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat.

4.3 Chemical Weapons

Chemical weapons (CW) lethality is based on the dissemination of poisons and other toxic substances, usually as gases, liquids or sprays. Used extensively during World War I, they are relatively easy to manufacture or obtain since many of the substances involved have legitimate commercial applications and they are easy to employ. CW require the use of very large quantities to generate lethal concentrations on a large scale. Some 30 countries maintain or are actively developing a CW capability.

The WMD threat is complemented by advanced delivery systems in the form of ballistic and cruise missiles. In addition to the known nuclear powers, a considerable and growing number of states possess long range delivery capability. However, the variety of delivery means for WMD goes far beyond those provided by missile technology.

5. PROLIFERATION AND ARMS CONTROL

During the Cold War, arms control was primarily a tool for managing the US-Soviet Union nuclear arms race. The cold war is over. However, NATO governments and their security partners are still interested in arms control and disarmament because they wish to prevent conflict, increase security and protect people. Of course, arms control alone cannot prevent conflict. However, a world without controls on such weapons would be an even more dangerous world.

Proliferation is a major concern for most nations and for the Alliance in particular. Legal and political instruments to combat proliferation have been refined and strengthened during the last decades. Several bilateral US-Russian accords on nuclear arms control (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I, START II, Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM)) have all been signed, however only INF and START I are currently in force. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC, 1972) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC, 1993) are also in force today. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), signed in 1968, was renewed for an indefinite period in 1995, and reviewed in 2000. Further Review Conference on the NPT, which took place in May 2005 in New York, demonstrated that NPT retains a strong base of support and continues to be perceived as an effective bulwark against large-scale proliferation. Although a consensus could not be reached on a substantive final declaration,

the May 2005 review conference was successful in that it served as a useful forum where many nations could focus on the challenges facing the NPT, offering their views on how these challenges can be addressed effectively.

There are other arms control measures. The most controversial is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which would permanently ban all future nuclear tests. Currently, China, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the US (among others) have not ratified the CTBT. The CTBT will not enter into force until all 44 countries listed in the Treaty with relevant nuclear facilities have ratified it. Another arms control Treaty that has not yet been negotiated or ratified is the Fissile Material Cut off Treaty (FMCT), which would prohibit new production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for the purpose of making nuclear weapons.

Despite these efforts, proliferation has proven to be hardly controllable. The end of the Cold War and the effects of globalization have had an adverse impact on non-proliferation and have put arms control treaties under pressure. Trans-national barriers against trade in arms and components have gradually dropped and the spread of NBC specialists and knowledge has been difficult to counter.

The emergence of dual use technologies has further fuelled proliferation, because such technologies are often not covered by arms control regimes. The BTWC and CWC are strongly dependent on cooperation by the chemical and pharmaceutical industrial sector. The nexus between non-state actors and WMD presents another challenge to non-proliferation policies.

The anthrax releases in Washington in the wake of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 put the question of arms control and non-proliferation policy into a sharper focus. CW and BW are considered by many countries as “poor man’s atomic bombs” that can easily be produced and their possession may make them feel more secure and powerful than they might feel in relying on security guarantees by third countries. These tendencies have raised concerns over the future of non-proliferation regimes. New initiatives have emerged, including the US-European Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that focuses on the interdiction of transfer of WMD-related materials.

In its Strategic Concept, NATO has defined WMD as a direct threat to the Allies. In this vein, at the 1999 Washington Summit, the Alliance announced its WMD Initiative to improve overall Alliance political and military efforts in this area. A WMD Centre was established with the aims of coordinating proliferation related activities and intensifying consultation.

At the Prague Summit in November 2002 the Alliance endorsed the implementation of five nuclear, biological and chemical weapons defence initiatives: a Prototype Deployable NBC Analytical Laboratory; a Prototype NBC Event Response team; a virtual Centre of Excellence for NBC Weapons Defence; a NATO Biological and Chemical Defence Stockpile; and a Disease Surveillance system which would enhance the Alliance’s defence capabilities against weapons of mass destruction.

At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, the Allies underlined their commitment to reinforcing the NPT; expressed strong support for UNSC Resolution 1540; called on all states to establish effective national export controls; welcomed the adoption by the G-8 of its Action Plan on Non-Proliferation; expressed resolve on the need to strengthen common efforts to reduce and safeguard nuclear and radiological materials and to prevent and contain the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. During the next summits NATO members confirmed determined goals and continued in the fulfilment of tasks in this so important area.

6. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the article, in the context of the above mentioned information, it is possible to state that the last years have very clearly demonstrated that the nature of security threats and risks to an international security has changed significantly.

Global security challenges, such as terrorism, organized crime, weapons of mass destruction or arms proliferation together with other security challenges and risks have created an entirely new security environment. National states' monopoly on using force is eroding, state boundaries have lost much of their importance and private actors have become increasingly powerful in international security.

History proves that many security threats would never have grown into a fully-fledged problem, if they had been identified and addressed at an earlier stage. Therefore, the North-Atlantic Alliance as the most powerful political and military organization together with partners, other international organizations and societies have to act as early as possible to reduce the probability that risks develop their potential of turning into serious threats for to regional or global security.

It is vital to identify potential scenarios where terrorism, insurgency, organized crime, arm proliferation or cyber-attacks could evolve from being abstract and hypothetical menaces into posing real and severe problems — and seeking tangible solutions for prevention.

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