ON SOME CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SECURITY RISKS AND 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 of the bipolar division of the world. Still more and more deepening globalisation 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 risks and challenges.

Key words: Security, risks, challenges, terrorism, national identity, pluralism, environment, resource scarcity, demography and migration.

Introduction

To begin with, it is necessary to point out that the current security challenges and risks in the global security environment are of a military and non-military nature; however, 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 also say 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 risks and challenges (except organised crime, weapons of mass destruction, or proliferation and arms control) are problems mainly related to terrorism, nationalism and pluralism, environment, scarcity of resources, and demography and migration.

Nationalism and Pluralism

By virtue of its very nature, mankind has always had a sense of belonging. In antiquity, outsiders were commonly referred to as the "Barbarians." Tribes, religion, class, profession, ideology and nationality have all been common denominators, albeit at varying degrees, employed by individuals to identify themselves. National identity (perhaps closely followed by religion, and in which it is most often rooted) has instilled the strongest sense of belonging among human beings. Countless discussions of nationhood and national identity begin with the question: what is a nation? This question is not as theoretically innocent as it seems: the very terms in which it is framed presuppose the existence of an entity that needs to be defined.

One school of thought claims that ethnicity preceded nations. From ethnic origins, nations could emerge as a result of revolutions in the division of labour, control of administration, and cultural coordination that predominantly but not exclusively took high cultures and turned them into national identities.

Another school of thought argues that nations were created de novo and while they may have some roots in ethnicity, the past is not important. Where nationalism does not exist, it will be created to serve the needs of cultural homogeneity of which nationalism is the overriding component. History has seen re-creations

of national identity but what matters is the forces that led to these re-creations rather than what they grew out of.

Others say that national identity, as a concept, depends on history, but not in any empirical or predetermined way. National identity seeks to occupy a privileged position as the "master identity", even as it competes and interacts with other identities and other histories which suggest other interpretations of the nation. Sanjay Seth, writing about India, concurs: 'for most nationalisms, history has been that space where national identity is formed and/or found'.

Nationalism is used to describe two quite distinct things: a political doctrine or an ideology, a set of political principles that movements and individuals accept, or a social and political movement. Nationalism as a movement first manifested itself in Western Europe and in the Americas. The multi-ethnic Empires of the past gradually ceded to demands for independence, while World War I swept away the Continent's dynastic monarchs. World War II brought an end to the European Empires in Asia and Africa. In contemporary history, we have witnessed the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia along national lines.

Nationalism and national identity constitute the ethical, moral and even legal basis of international relations. In international relations, the principles of national self-determination, the rule that every self-identified nation should have its own sovereign state and the concept of inviolability of physical borders have become international norms. The modern term "nation state" implies that all states can, and do, represent a people.

There are two major difficulties with the concept of the nation-state. The first is that, carried to an extreme, it means that every one of the thousands of nationalities on Earth should have its own state, which would make for a very messy world. The other problem is that a pure nation-state does not exist in nature. Ethnic boundaries almost never coincide with political ones. Creating territorial states that are based on the ethnic identity of its citizens can hardly be equated with progress in a globalised world.

It is clear from events on a global scale, especially from those recently witnessed in the Balkans, Caucasus, and some parts of Africa and Asia, that intolerance for "the other," whether that "other" is defined in terms of tribe, religion, nationality,

etc., is a dangerous phenomenon that must be adamantly rejected. And how can one explain the growing basis of support in Europe for extreme right parties, which base their rhetoric on extreme nationalism, ethnicity and xenophobia? Still many Europeans reject the idea that multi-cultural diversity is a source of social strength. Is this not an open challenge to the best qualities of Europe, namely openness, tolerance and diversity? Does the concept of the civil nation provide for a better and more inclusive security framework than the ethnic nation?

Pluralism lies at the heart of modern democratic systems and societies. This entails a strong degree of coexistence, tolerance and understanding of differences. It is, in other words, a system of accommodating diversity. Hence, the central issue for the near future is how differences, specific cultural features and symbols of identity can be organised in a world without borders.

History shows that pluralism does not occur naturally and that some societies have been more successful in cultivating this ideal political and cultural state than others. Pluralism requires constant investment and protection against the aforementioned exclusivist tendencies. An interesting question is whether the pluralistic state is something made by history or because of history.

Environment

Environmental integrity is a key component in human security, which in turn is a significant element of wider security. Therefore, ongoing environmental degradation is one of the greatest challenges today and for the decades to come. Changes to the natural ecosystems occur at a larger scale than ever before. The underlying reason has been the rapid increase in the scope and intensity of human activity. The changes made to ecosystems have contributed to substantial gains in human well-being and economic development, but these gains have been achieved at growing costs. Humanity's global ecological footprint (the global renewable natural resources consumption) has overshot the Earth's biological production capacity ever since the 1980s. Currently the ecological deficit is as high as 20%.

In the past decades, economic logic superseded environmental concerns. The exploitation of the environment has resulted in climate changes, acid rain,

deforestation, ozone depletion, melting of the polar icecap, a growing number of environmental refugees, the spreading of malaria, etc. In addition, the inventiveness of mankind has inflicted damage to the environment, intentionally or by carelessness.

Over the last three decades, world population has grown by 50% to more than 7 billion and is expected to rise by almost another 50% over the next four decades. Nearly all the growth is taking place in the developing world. Consumption of natural resources by modern industrial nations remains very high. An extension of this kind of resource-intensive economic model is simply not environmentally sustainable.

The environmental problems can be categorised as:
- Local: e.g. water pollution, air pollution, illegal waste dumping, soil loss, poor sanitation, etc.
- Regional: e.g. acid rain, contamination of underground aquifers, large oil spills, desertification, etc.
- Global: e.g. global warming and ozone depletion.

The need for some environmental pressures to be brought under control has been recognised by the UN. Since the early 90s, the UN has launched a range of initiatives to manage the global environment:
- The Earth Summit on environment in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 1992 (including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change),
- The UN Conference on Climate Change in Kyoto in Japan in 1997 (Following ratification by the Russian Federation, the Kyoto Protocol became legally binding for its 128 parties in February 2005),
- The Hague and Bonn Conferences on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in Netherland and Germany in 2000,
- The Millennium Summit in 2000, where the Millennium Development Goals were agreed,
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in South Africa in 2002,
- The World Summit in 2005,
- The UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in Denmark in 2009,
- The UN Conference on Climate Change in Cancun in Mexico in 2010
- The UN Conference on Climate Change in Durban in South Africa in 2011,

– The UN Conference on Climate Change in Doha in Qatar in 2012,
– The UN Conference on Climate Change in Warsaw in Poland 2013.

Johannesburg witnessed that the international community was divided in the most urging environmental question embodied in the Kyoto Protocol and this is global warming in relation to greenhouse gas emissions. Despite differences in views about the extent to which greenhouse gases cause global warming, there is an increasing consensus that recent warming is human-created, that rising temperature means increasing vulnerability to ecosystems and societies and that climate change is inextricable from other environmental concerns (i.e. biodiversity changes, desertification, water availability and air quality. Nevertheless, the level of economic damage that might be inflicted by greenhouse gas abatement is so uncertain that even the Kyoto Protocol, to date the most ambitious attempt to address climate change, says not a word about what the "right" level of emissions should be.

The scale of the problem of global warming is the reason why it is so much in the focus of thinking about the environment. But so far, economic logic and strife for profit, or sometimes for sheer survival, supersedes noble theories.

Environmental sustainability is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals endorsed by the world leaders in the year 2000 and is increasingly a theme of all development strategies. The outcome document, called "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment", in which UNEP (UN Environmental Programme) was closely involved, reaffirmed the importance of environmental protection as one of the three mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, alongside economic and social development. The assessment revealed that 60 per cent of the world's ecosystems are in decline or even degraded to an extent that we can no longer rely on their services. These services include climate regulation, clean air and water, fertile land and productive fisheries.

In the past decades, environmental deterioration has increased but, in the meantime, globalisation has also brought about greater environmental consciousness. The experiences with monitoring the earth's environmental system on the one hand, and the scientific efforts to develop global environmental dynamic models on the other, have highlighted the huge complexity of the system for which forecasting appears to be extremely difficult. Reversing the degradation of ecosystems, while meeting

increasing demands for their services, seems to be the main challenge today. Changes in policy can decrease many of the negative consequences of growing pressures on ecosystems. However, the actions needed for this are much larger than those currently taken. Most ecosystem services have already suffered, but the damage would have been even greater without the conservation actions taken so far.

As for the North Atlantic Alliance's approach to security in the 21st century, as stated in NATO's strategic concept, it recognises the importance of environmental factors, among a host of other elements. In addition, defence issues themselves have a considerable impact vis-ŕ-vis the environment. The huge risk that sunken nuclear submarines pose for the environment, the future of idle nuclear and chemical arsenals, the environmental impact of various types of munitions, and last but not least, the related consequences of military campaigns, provide ample evidence of an inherent link.

At present, NATO is participating actively in the ‚Environmental Security Initiative' in Central Asia and the Caucasus, together with other international organisations such as UNDP, UNEP and OSCE. NATO is also contributing to capacity building in Partner countries by launching ‚Science for Peace' projects to enable the experts and scientists to address their environmental problems.

Resource Scarcity

Resources comprise everything that the earth and the cosmos provides to mankind to exist, survive and to develop further. Amongst other things, this includes water, food and energy.

71% of the planet is water but less than 3% of it is fresh. Most of that is either in the form of ice and snow in Greenland and Antarctica or in deep ground water aquifers. And less than 1% of that water (0.1% of all the earth's water) is considered available for human needs, with much of it remote.

Global water consumption is rising quickly, and water availability is likely to become one of the most pressing and contentious resource issues of the 21st Century. The scarcity and uneven distribution of water makes masses of people

move on as environmental refugees. In many Sub-Saharan countries, the average per capita water–use is 10-20 litres a day. (By contrast, the per capita residential use in Europe runs as high as about 200 litres a day.) At the dawn of the 21st century, 1.3 billion people did not have access to safe drinking water. Some 2.5 billion, 35% of the world's population, lack adequate sanitation and 5 million die each year from water-related diseases.

One third of the world's population lives in countries already experiencing moderate to high water stress, and that number could rise to two thirds in the next 30 years without serious water conservation measures and coordinated watershed planning among water users. Experts claim that we have to focus on new methods of using existing water.

If unsettled, disputes over water may ultimately escalate into international conflict. There is an obvious risk for water disputes to become more common in the future, as the pressure on limited fresh water resources grows.

Global food production is generally adequate to meet human nutritional needs, but problems with distribution mean that more than 800 million people remain undernourished. World food production is still rising, but several trends will make it more challenging to feed an additional 2 billion people over the next 30 years. Yields of the major grain crops are rising at a lower rate now than in the past and post-harvest losses remain high. Soil degradation from erosion and poor irrigation practices continues to harm agricultural lands, jeopardising production in some regions. In general, without a transition to more resource-efficient and less toxic farming methods, it will be difficult to meet world food needs in the future without increasing agriculture's environmental burden. Genetic farming is an innovation that might contribute to agricultural productivity, though some experts are skeptical about the environmental and health-effects of genetic engineering of food.

Overall consumption of natural resources by modern industrial economies remains very high, in a range of 45 to 85 metric tons per person annually when all materials (including soil erosion, mining wastes, and other ancillary materials) are counted. It currently requires about 300 kilograms of natural resources to generate US $100 of income in the world's most advanced economies. Given the size of these economies, this volume of materials represents the truly massive scale of environmental change.

Global energy use, which has increased nearly 70 percent since 1971, is projected to increase at more than 2% annually for the next 15 years while competition for access to large energy reserves will only grow more intense in the years to come. The strategic importance of vital resources, especially oil and natural gas is growing and shifts the focus of the main players of world policy to the areas where these recourses can be found.

The increased competition over access to major sources of oil and gas, shared water supplies and other valuable commodities have produced a new geography of conflict, a reconfigured cartography in which resource flows rather than political and ideological divisions constitute the major fault lines. The dependence on the use of hydrocarbons increases the vulnerability of developed countries and adds to the probability of conflicts arising from intensified competition over access to critical materials.

Yet, OPEC forecasts on oil and gas availability indicate that for the mid term, oil and gas production will continue to grow and keep pace with growing demand, while maintaining enough reserves for several decades to come. Energy systems are vital to the functioning of modern society. Energy security is not simply a function of energy supply but depends on the elaborate systems of interconnected networks that are often transnational, making this a global security issue. How to address the multiple challenges posed by the evolving security environment to critical energy systems infrastructure is a key question facing national governments, regional authorities, as well as inter-governmental and international organisations, including NATO.

For the foreseeable future, hydrocarbons will remain economically more attractive energy sources compared to the renewable ones such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and others. However, the economic balance on energy production does not take into account the burden that the large-scale use of hydrocarbons puts on the environment. Translating the invaluable into economic terms might give another dimension and direction to R&D on alternative energy sources. Due to recent initiatives, both in Europe and in the United States, the use of hydrogen energy is on the horizon. This potentially makes the growing world economy less dependent on oil.

Demography and Migration

World population has more than doubled since 1950 and is approximately 7.2 billion today. Rapid population growth and relatively high fertility levels in the world's 48 least developed countries, and rising life expectancy everywhere, will help push the world population from 7.2 bn to about 9.1 bn by 2050. It is estimated that 85% of the population will live in developing countries. Six countries account for half the world's population increase: India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Generally speaking, the rate of growth of population has declined significantly in recent years, and assuming that all developing countries will achieve replacement fertility levels (2.1 children per woman) over the next half a century, we can envisage a 50% increase in world population. Currently, the highest fertility rates tend to be found in countries suffering from poverty, food insecurity and natural resource degradation.

The increase in the population, if realised, is certain to intensify pressure on food and water resources in many parts of the developing world and presents an enormous challenge to international aid, poverty reduction and education programmes.

The trend outlined above will have an impact on the age structure of the world population. The developing world will host a much larger group of working-age adults, with an increase of 30 million people annually in the period 1990 – 2010. In the light of the recent decline in economic development worldwide, the most likely prospect for the future is a substantial increase in those looking in vain for productive employment.

In parallel with these changes, there have been profound demographic shifts, as people have migrated and continue to migrate from rural to urban areas in search of work and new opportunities. Since 1950, the number of people living in urban areas has jumped from 750 million (25%) to more than 2.5 billion people (35%). In 2050, two out of three citizens of the world will live in an urbanised environment. The frequency of crises and conflicts to occur in big cities is likely to follow the demographic trend.

In the aftermath of the cold war, international borders have become porous and easier to penetrate. Technological advances have made communication and transportation much easier and cheaper. Against this background, deteriorating economic circumstances, disparity in levels of development and living standards, as well as political turmoil and regional conflicts have created a significant trend in mass movements of people. The UN estimates the stock of those currently living outside their country of birth as high as 180 million. International migration, including political refugees and "economic-migrants", has resulted in the emergence of multi-ethnic societies of a new type within nation's state borders practically everywhere. In today's world, there are less real refugees among the many "economic migrants" who are fleeing poverty rather then persecution and who are simply looking for a job and a better life.

Irrespective of their country of origin, international migrants have a number of characteristics in common:
- Most are men who migrate when they are in their twenties or thirties;
- They are more often single than married;
- They more often live with their parents than on their own before emigration;
- Their educational level is usually low;
- Their motive to migrate is often a pervasive 'culture of migration', they follow their friends and relatives who have already migrated;
- Female migration is frequently related to family reunification.

In Western European countries, "economic migration" coincides with the need for more labour, since the indigenous working population is shrinking. But the needs of a country do not necessarily coincide with the numbers, quality and skills of the people who want to immigrate to the country. Hence, proper management of migration is required, including a mechanism to differentiate between refuge seekers and economic migrants. Within an EU context, there is an obvious need for an integrated management strategy for migration as an element of foreign policy. Initiatives towards a common asylum policy have already been set in motion.

High rates of immigration have had considerable social impacts on societies throughout Europe. This has served as breeding grounds for distorted ultra nationalistic and chauvinistic ideas that have in some instances been capitalised on by political actors. Illegal immigration, to a large extent driven by human

trafficking, might further fuel these sentiments. In an extreme scenario, this might escalate into inter-ethnic rivalry and violence, thus jeopardising a country's internal security and stability.

Another phenomenon that is indirectly related to migration and that poses a rapidly growing risk to security is infectious disease. The globalising scale of the economy has led to an increase of transnational and trans-regional movement of people and livestock. This has a multiplier effect on the range and velocity of the spread of infectious diseases. AIDS is the clearest example of the risk of global epidemics.

Migration also has an impact on the societies of origin. Migration may be a tool of development, through remittances and through investment of human capital by returning migrants. On the other hand, migration may drain the countries of origin of valuable human resources. These considerations are to be incorporated in the migration policies of the receiving regions through dialogue with the sending countries.

Terrorism

Prior to 11 September 2001, terrorism was only one among a large and growing number of international security concerns. Since then it has moved to the centre of concerns for 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 accepted 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 by 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 the 9/11 terrorist attacks implicitly defines terrorism as consisting of terrorist acts irrespective of their causes and goals. Hence, the 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 11 September 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 organisation and operational approach. Terrorists are organised 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 drawn from a total belief in a theological and absolute truth, which ultimately requires the destruction of non-believers. This then legitimises 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, which creates 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 realised 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. NATO 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 organisations 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 NATO 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 NATO members' 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.

Conclusions

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

Global security risks and challenges related to nationalism, environment, resource scarcity, migration or terrorism, 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 organisation, together with partners, other international organisations and societies have to act as early as possible to reduce the probability that risks develop their potential of turning into serious threats for regional or global security.

It is vital to identify potential scenarios where the mentioned threats could evolve from being abstract and hypothetical menaces into posing real and severe problems — and seeking tangible solutions for their prevention.

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