

THE CURRENT INTERDEPENDENCE OF SECURITY SECTORS ON INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

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Abstract: *The content of this article outlines a different and complete picture of how the security sectors (political, military, economic, societal and environmental) interact today. Therefore, using contextual analysis as a research method, it will aim to generate detailed answers to the following research question: How the growing dynamics of the international relations, the multidimensionality confrontation environments of actors and the rise of high-tech affect the interdependence between security sectors?*

Thus, I will determine the causality between the three factors and the interdependence of the security sectors through an analysis of recent security issues from different security complexes. Therefore, the aim of the article is to highlight the steady increase of reciprocity within the security sectors of the respective actor on the international stage, but also within the security complexes in which it is embedded. It will show that a security problem, regardless of the sector in which it is triggered, often overflows the other sectors and even to other actors. Today, states are so dependent on each other that often the analysis itself and the resolution of the security problems cannot be done independently. However, the threshold of acceptance and the level at which a common security problem is felt differs from one state to another, depending on specific factors that will be detailed in the article.

Keywords: *interdependence; security sectors; security problem; international relations; multidimensionality of confrontational environments; high-tech.*

Introduction

The vision of the Copenhagen School remains the most appropriate one to frame the events taking place today in terms of security. As Barry Buzan argues in his paper *Security - A New Framework for Analysis*, the traditional approach is not useful or appropriate anymore and gives way to a comprehensive one that considers the interaction of all security sectors (political, military, economic, societal and environmental) when a security problem arises. This article comes to complete this view, firstly by presenting and demonstrating the three factors reminded in the research questions (*the growing dynamics of international relations, the multidimensionality confrontation environments of actors and the rise of high-tech*) as influencing the process of interaction of the security sectors and, secondly, by supporting the recently emerging concept of complementing the actors' environments of confrontation with relatively new ones (the cyber/digital environment and the cognitive environment).

The study carried out in this regard is qualitative and will support future scientific research by providing new arguments on the imperative of continuing to use a comprehensive approach to any security issue. A first step is to maintain this thinking, based on causal

reasoning, in security analysis by directing the focus on the questions *How? Why? When?* These questions will then highlight, in the depth of the analysis, the interaction between security sectors in the context of the current hybrid manifestations of the main international actors.

Thus, security remains one of the most contested topics on the agenda of meetings of state and non-state leaders in international relations and, “security is the process that takes politics beyond the rules of the game and the framework of the problem” (Buzan, de Wilde, Waever 2010, 44). Therefore, international actors are forced to reorder their agenda and re-prioritize the topics they address when a security issue arises. A public issue can be on the non-politicized, politicized or securitized spectrum. Its placement in one of the three situations is generated by several factors, but mainly by the interference of state values and interests within a geopolitical context. For a public issue to be considered a security issue it must involve three characteristics: it must pose an existential threat, it must require emergency action, and it must produce negative effects within inter-unit relations if left unresolved (Buzan, de Wilde, le Waever 2010, 48).

A security problem may be generated within one area of interest but at the same time it may involve or affect others. These areas have been defined by some experts as the five security sectors: political, military, economic, societal and environmental. Nowadays they are closely interlinked if we refer to almost any newly emerging security issue. Their interdependence has been noted since ancient times and used in various ways to tip the balance of power in favor of the one with the vision to do so. Subsequently, various theories have developed, including the need to pivot from the traditional approach to security (involving only the military and political sectors) to a comprehensive approach, encompassing all security sectors.

A century of extreme changes, exposed to threats in various fields “the 21st century is a century of interdependencies” (Frunzeti 2009, 5). This generalized interdependence is high due to the fact that most states are component parts of more security complexes than in the past (alliances, coalitions, international governmental and non-governmental organizations but also ideologies/currents/socio-political movements with a cross-border character, etc.). In these security complexes, the dynamics of actions are determined by the international relations between actors, the environments in which they take place, and also by the fulminant rise of new technologies, a facilitating factor due to some consequences such as: speed of data processing, reduced consumption of resources, timeliness of information, “an unprecedented compression of space and time” (Frunzeti 2009, 5); in the virtual environment, actors can meet, debate and take decisions in record time without having to travel, etc.

1. The concept of contemporary security and the interdependence of security sectors

The definition of the concept of security generally depends on the perspective from which it is approached. However, contemporary security can no longer be viewed from a single angle, but requires a holistic approach, analyzing all possible effects across security sectors and considering all possible combinations and scenarios. This is necessary in the situation of the increasing use of hybrid warfare tactics, for example in the conflict of Ukraine: “a mixture of military and non-military means of aggression, with deception, through overt and covert actions” (Buşe 2014, 10). At the same time, the reality in which we live presents itself as a requirement in this regard: contradictory events, clear lack of demarcation between war and peace, the possibility of fighting a war in peacetime without falling under international legal jurisdiction (cyber, cognitive, psychological warfare - known for actions in the grey area) due to gaps in this area, economic blackmail, etc.

Interdependence within a security complex can also be deduced from the following definition by Professor Barry Buzan: “International security is determined fundamentally by the internal and external security of different social systems, by the extent to which, in general,

the identity of the system depends on external circumstances. Experts generally define societal security as internal security” (Buzan, de Wilde, Waever 2010, 28). Relating to the present day, even if the definition narrows the phrase security issue to the social sector in the largest part, it remains one of the main targets of new tactics specific to hybrid, psychological, cognitive warfare. However, the phenomenon is much more complex as security must be seen as a microsystem subject to a wide range of factors that can shape it. Therefore “following the rule of any system, it is characterized by stability or instability, a state given by the absence/presence of risk factors as a whole” (Iftode 2011, 56). These risk factors are mirrored by the wide range of vulnerabilities, risks and threats specific to each state. A good anticipatory knowledge of them and a real prediction of their possible effects on the security sectors will lead to the development of real and reliable strategies.

Focusing on what is subject of interest to the state, it can be seen that in general there are different approaches to the same security issues on international level. Thus, distinct conceptions are characteristic of strictly national identity-specific elements. “In the view of some currents in international relations theory, the concept of security in general and security policy in particular contain at their core elements of definition that are related to moral, ethical or religious values. The problem is that these are not represented and perceived in the same way in the world today. They give local or regional color to security policies but, more than that, they make the difference between the strategies promoted by different states and nations” (Buşe, 2014, 276). Therefore, it can also be seen on the basis of this theory that an international security issue can affect states and the interaction of security sectors differently (for example, hypothetically speaking, a law on limiting the access of migrants to the European Union (EU) space will affect the security of the states, from a military/police point of view, through which this space is penetrated, more than the security of the states that are transited. Similarly, from an economic point of view, the states that will become long-term hosts for migrants will be more affected than the states through which they merely transit).

The way in which security is affected by various factors is also noted by other authors: “At the global level, the security environment is undergoing a continuous transformation, reflecting: interdependencies and unpredictability in the system of international relations; the difficulty of delimiting classical risks and threats from asymmetric and hybrid ones” (Repez, Deaconu 2016, 10). In the above quotation, two of the three factors analyzed in this article stand out, namely: the growing dynamics of international relations and the multidimensionality of the environments in which actors confront each other.

2. Highlighting factors leading to the interdependence of security sectors in the context of recently disputed international security issues

International security stability is an elusive goal when access to resources is unequal, the needs are different, influence in markets is disproportionate, and the way actors pursue their interests is one that combines hybrid tactics often designed in multiple confrontational environments to achieve their goals. Nowadays, these hybrid tactics are applied across all security sectors, in different combinations, depending on the context, with a propensity for the use of cyber and cognitive attacks. The latter are preferred, as with judicious planning and execution (within the politico-military sectors most of the time), but also timely exploitation of the context, they will produce impressive effects at low cost in the societal sector (influencing public opinion playing a key role in influencing subsequent political decisions), but also in the economic or environmental sector (sabotage, information leakage, etc.). Cyber and cognitive confrontational environments are thus becoming 'modern battlefields' in which, due to

legislative loopholes and the possibility of concealing the perpetrator anonymously, actions under these new confrontational environments are carried out even in a state of peace.

International relations are in a “dynamic equilibrium” (Buşe 2012, 47) that captures actors in a continuous and non-linear movement in their activity to pursue their interests on the international stage. This partial equilibrium is disturbed by a variety of phenomena such as: the reconfiguration of multi-polarity at the global level and the redistribution of power within the balance of power, for example the “spectacular rise of China in the economic-military sphere” (Marga 2021, 311), the redefinition of some borders and the resizing of spheres of influence, such as the case of the Crimean peninsula in the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine (Valica 2021), differentiated access to resources - a generally accepted source of instability (Iftode 2011, 57), etc.

In order to project interests in international relations, geopolitical rivalries often crystallize in which “[...] actors are in constant competition. They will use everything from persuasion to threats and coercion. The ability of an actor to impose itself or not in the dispute with other actors is given by its potential power/power resources, the place it occupies in the structure of international relations and the prestige it enjoys” (Buşe 2014, 55). The use by actors of all means to achieve their objectives implies, without a doubt, the unconditional interaction of all security sectors. Persuasion can be attributed to the political and social sectors describing actions to determine individuals to choose certain options against them, while for the other actions, threat and coercion, tools belonging to the economic and military sectors are often used.

The rapid rise of high-tech and the market competition that has emerged as a result are driving down procurement prices and facilitating wider access for actors to acquire armaments, equipment, military technology, new generation IT&C products, etc. This development implies another dangerous trend whereby states and non-state actors are acquiring and owning disproportionately to their real defense needs, the ability to project their own force or even the availability of their own resources in this segment. The military sector therefore inevitably influences the economic, social and political sectors. Imbalances are created within the organization by resources being re-planned and redistributed to the military sector or even by the economy being forced to produce in this direction. Certainly the societal sector is the first to be affected, and then the political sector, because at regional level, these changes alter the centers of power and reorganize the balance of power.

2.1 Russian Federation intervention in Ukraine. Cognitive attacks

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) currently recognizes five battlefields: land, air, sea, space and cyber. However, the application of certain hybrid tactics, which is also generating new approaches in the growing literature, is creating a sixth field: “the cognitive battlefield” (Mahajan 2023), thus highlighting the multidimensionality of the environments of confrontation presented. The actor can therefore project his force into the physical, the cyber and a new virtual environment, one that increasingly seeks to subjugate the will of the adversary and psychologically influence him to act in accordance with the adversary's interests and therefore contrary to the way he would consciously do so.

According to the definition of the great theorist Carl von Clausewitz, war: “[...] is an act of violence designed to compel our adversary to do our will”. We can say that the definition remains true today, the aim also being to hijack the will, but this goal can also be achieved by an indirect, conspiratorial act of violence, directed at the subconscious level, without visible traces at first sight. A cognitive attack can thus induce an action but also an inaction “to use an invisible hand, to control the opponent's will, making the opponent feel: I can't and I dare not, and then achieve the effect of: I don't want to” (Bernal, Carter, Singh, Cao, Madreperla 2020). Its most important feature is the possibility to carry out cognitive attacks in peacetime as well, due to the anonymity of this range of actions.

The Russian Federation has used and is still using classic tools of cognitive attacks, such as disinformation and propaganda, in the Ukraine conflict. The main security sector that has

been and is intended to be affected by these attacks, subscribed to the new combat environment, is the societal sector. The change in the perception and the will of the society will determine in turn an effect on the political and military sector, which will have to comply with or, less often, oppose the new visions/desires of society. In the following I will recount a set of actions in the sphere of cognitive attacks captured by Georgii Pochepstov, professor at Mariupol State University, during the war in Ukraine:

- “change in the language for describing the situation, borrowing from a sample of older negative situations;
- making up fake events and objects in order to keep the selected line of attack on the opponent;
- organizing different protest actions on the Ukrainian territory for Russian TV-news consumption;
- only one interpretation for an event could be seen on TV, drowning any dangerous counter-information that can appear;
- inviting biased journalists and experts;
- military actions are justified solely by noble, just motives; the enemy is portrayed as coming out of hell;
- anchoring bias – the interpretation that comes first is not so easy to change, and the Russian TV was the first to interpret the situation;
- selective perception – we see what we want to see: Russian journalists were looking for and giving negative view of the Ukrainian situation;
- availability heuristic – overestimation of the importance of information available: with all four Russian channels speaking from one governing centre, the viewers were thinking that they know the whole truth;
- bandwagon effect – groupthink doesn’t allow room for individual view, which contradicts the central view of the events;
- blind spot bias – we see mistakes only in others’ words and arguments: Russian journalist and viewers many times were saying that Ukrainian citizens are turned into zombies by their TV” (Pochepstov 2018).

Summarizing the above, it can be seen that cognitive attacks can be directed either at the adversary in order to shape its will to act in a certain way or not to act, or they can be directed at one's own social sector in order to legitimize executed and/or future actions, to discredit the adversary and to induce the feeling of the necessity to continue supporting the regime's actions.

Thus, in the case presented above, the multidimensionality of the confrontation environments influencing the interaction of the political, military and societal sectors can be observed, leading to the interdependence necessary for the continuation of the actions and tactics assumed. The breeding ground on which these false messages have been inseminated is rendered by several specific characteristics of the affected population in this area:

- in such a context people look more to the emotional zone and radical speeches (much simpler, easily constructed and with concrete and safe destinations to be absorbed) to confirm their emotions;
- some new events initially create information voids that are speculated and filled by manipulators of public opinion;
- the public has already become accustomed (as of 24 February 2022) to the new news model (delivery of false information in breaking news packaging, which induces the idea of topicality, timeliness, the need to consume it immediately) and as a consequence there is less and less readership of specialized articles from reliable sources, which of course do not have such an impact because of their form.

2.2 The conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Influencing the rise of hi-tech - economic effects on Germany

The conflict between the State of Israel and the Islamic terrorist organization, Hamas, affects different actors on the international scene to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their interests in this area and on international relations. Germany may be one of the countries that seems to have something to lose from this conflict. Israel is an important partner in the development of new technologies, according to Rolf Langhammer, senior researcher at the Institute for the World Economy (IWE) in Kiel, as quoted by DW television: “Trade and direct investment between the two countries is low, but for technology transfer and research cooperation in areas such as the natural and physical sciences, Israel is extremely important and has remained so since 1960 [...] Industry leaders expect the two countries' collaboration to remain strong, with Israel leading the way in areas such as cyber security, biotechnology, medicine and renewable energy. But in the short term, many projects could be put on hold as uncertainty continues to remain the order of the day in the region” (Langhammer 2023).

The interplay of the security, military, political and economic sectors is easily seen if we look further into the actions of the German government. A government representative has stated that the German state will give its full support to Israel and that it has a fundamental right to self-defense. Further, according to the same publication (Martin, 2023), Germany should position itself carefully in relation to this conflict, as it risks causing imbalances in the balance of power or even losing more important partners, with some countries condemning Israel's way of fighting against Hamas terrorists and also some of its military actions. Political scientist Marius Ghincea, a lecturer at Syracuse University USA, divided European states into three main categories: “What can international relations theory tell us about the positions of Western states on the events in Israel/Palestine? In the case of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, Western states have adopted three types of positions: (a) they have exclusively supported Israel (Germany, Great Britain); (b) they have adopted a nuanced position, balancing Israel's right to defend itself with calls for restraint (France, USA); (c) they have condemned Israel without necessarily defending Hamas/Palestinians (Spain, Ireland)” (Ghincea 2023).

Thus, in the case presented above, the intertwining of the two factors can be observed: the growing dynamics of international relations (highlighted by the strategy adopted by the German state to balance its own interests with the maintenance of international relations with other states) and the rise of high technologies (shaped by Germany's need to maintain its position in this segment with the help of its partner, the state of Israel), and their effects on the interdependence of the following security sectors: political, military, economic.

At the same time, Germany's position towards Israel is also outlined as an attempt to diminish its unpleasant past, regarding the anti-Semitic policy and genocides committed during the Holocaust by the Nazi government, as the German literature itself states “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” – the German term for dealing with the Nazi past (Frei 1996). This national shame and the way in which attempts are being made to diminish it also illustrate the interaction of the dynamics of international relations with the political and societal sector.

Conclusions

The direction, in which society is heading, in principle, as many authors have confirmed over the years, is without doubt the creation of a new world order, subscribed to the phenomenon of globalization. A system which wants to be perfect from all points of views (political, military, economic, societal and environmental), a 'better world' as it will be called at some point. This is one argument for why security interdependence is intended to be ever greater and is already visibly on the rise internationally. A new world order can only be created

within a strong security framework without the occurrence of remarkable incidents but also, the international order tends to undergo significant changes primarily in response to major events. In this context, the development of effective international relations, first at the inter-state level and then at the regional and global level, becomes not the goal but the motivation for creating real security interdependence.

International relations increasingly take on the form of a race against time in terms of pursuing interests, grabbing as many resources as possible and monopolizing markets. In this sense they appear linear and predictable on the surface, officially, but in essence, the individual good takes precedence over the collective good. As the American writer Alvin Toffler rightly said in his 1980s book *The Third Wave*, these things are being done much more quickly today and are being turned on their head in many ways, thanks to the ever-growing information society in which we live. Actors have been quick to link the concept of power with that of information domination and thus the new modern confrontational environment, the cyber/digital dimension, has crystallized. Further on, either various tactics already established (e.g. disinformation, propaganda used in combination by the political and military sector in the Ukrainian conflict) were adapted, mainly using digital social platforms of information at the expense of classical ones such as radio, television, or new ones were developed based on more subtle techniques of influencing, changing perception or dominating the will of the adversary (e.g. in cognitive warfare where the purpose of launching an information is more difficult to intuit).

The phenomenon of the rise of high technologies remains the reason why society has arrived in the information age. One of the key conditions for the emergence of this new environment of confrontation, which is successfully used in all security sectors (especially political, military and societal), is that it usually encompasses technologies that are accessible, do not require special resources and are readily available to most citizens (the best example is the smartphone). In this sense, the environment of confrontation encompasses both these physical components, but above all components that are not easily identifiable (e.g. the ether, cyberspace, the online environment, etc.). It is therefore impossible to really define this 'theatre of operations' in terms of time and space and also to identify the perpetrator and, consequently, to define the security sectors (an action to steal information which, on the face of it, is launched by the economic sector may have political or military implications if the information is of a strategic nature). The development of new technologies and the struggle for informational advantage are themselves interdependent in the view of the players (this is one of the reasons why Germany, for example, has from the outset sided with Israel, a key partner in the development of hi-tech).

Thus, as stated at the beginning of the article, the interaction of the security sectors is different depending on the context and the interests of each actor. By comparison, it can be seen that in the case of the conflict in Ukraine most NATO actors almost entirely sided with Kiev, but in the case of the Middle East conflict they take different positions primarily due to the dynamics of international relations and individual state interests, and even if most actors are part of the same security complex (EU, NATO) and share common values. At the same time, the interaction of the security sectors is inevitable and necessary today, and this process is certainly accentuated by the factors outlined and confirmed in the article (*the growing dynamics of international relations, the multidimensionality of the environments in which the players are confronted and the rise of high-tech*).

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