CURRENT THREATS TO WORLD SECURITY

Viliam PASTOR, PhD candidate
Colonel, Doctoral School, „Carol I" National Defense University
vili_pastor@yahoo.com

Abstract: Each historical era corresponded to a certain type of technological revolution that produced transformations both in terms of the theory of military science and in the field of strategies, techniques, tactics and procedures for preparing and conducting the phenomenon of war. Thus, the beginning of the 21st century has been marked by major transformations of the global security environment, an environment conducive to hybrid dangers and threats that can seriously affect contemporary human society. Moreover, migration, terrorism, organized crime, the nuclear threat and pandemics are and will remain the main sources of global insecurity and major threats to global security. The persistence and rapid evolution of these phenomena motivate us to investigate the field, to analyze the sources of instability that seriously threaten the security of the human evolutionary environment and to present to the informed public a study of current threats to global security.

Keywords: current threats; security; migration; risk; SARS-CoV-2.

> *„The changes in life help the future to invade our present"*
> *Alvin Toffler*

Introduction

This study on "*Current threats to global security*" is motivated by the new realities of the international context, derived from the structural changes of the security environment (political, military, economic, religious, cultural and social), by the strategies created in the operational plan at global, continental, regional and national levels, which have rapidly imposed new transformations on crisis prevention, addressing and management and global security threats. Thus, to investigate the field of global security, analyze and synthesize information specific to the phenomenon of hybrid threats, I chose to answer the most important questions that trouble contemporary society (migration to Central and Western Europe, international terrorism and cross-border organized crime, nuclear and cybernetics threats, pandemics caused by uncontrolled viruses, etc.).

Since ancient times, humanity has understood the need to channel power to peaceful ends so that society and the individual will benefit from peace, increased living standards, clean nature, resources and science, progress and freedom. However, humanity is facing new uncertainties, risks, crises and conflicts, although new concepts have been developed on the security of individuals and states that can provide realistic, reliable solutions to defuse crisis and conflict situations that can degenerate in deviations from normal. An eloquent example is the balance of military power, which has adapted to new dangers and continues to shape its strategies, structures, missions and goals to deal with contemporary threats. This phenomenon is explainable because in the General Theory of Military Science it is shown that some change in the balance of power is normal at various historical moments, but it has never happened that an entire global system of power should disintegrate completely over a very short time, with important changes in the rules of the game of power. This is happening and the very nature of power is revolutionizing because, according to Alvin Toffler, "*each era has a certain kind of war*"[1].

The world, with all its immense advances in technology, civilization and culture, information and economy, is crushed by great contradictions, immense challenges, discrepancies, in which the forms of progress and those of protest against the side effects of this progress are vectors which, as they move away, they increase the degree of tension, crisis areas and conflict, constantly generating new types of threats. At this moment, more than ever, the

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[1] Toffler Alvin, *Puterea în mişcare*, Editura Antet, Bucureşti, 2000, p. 12.

appreciations made by Alvin Toffler in the work "*Power in Motion*", the last volume of a trilogy with which it reached its peak and total worldwide recognition, according to which power, which largely defines us as individuals and as a nation, redefines itself[2].

It is interesting to note the way of transformation and transition to a higher state or category of wars, while maintaining some of its previous characteristics. Therefore, in the future we may experience military threats, non-military or pandemics that can affect the world's population, severely affecting security. The invisible enemy we perceive is sometimes impossible to identify and combat, because military revolutions are not reduced to the result of inventing and modernizing technology, but to transforming the dimensions and ways of countering security threats and waging war[3].

The global approach to world security leads us to the idea that threats and their intensity are generated by the disposition, structure, economic and military power, development and social order and religion of a state, an area or even a continent. Identifying threats to global and regional security is, in the 21st century, the priority goal of states, regardless of their economic, military or social status. Identifying threats to a state or an interstate organization would lead to understanding and combating threats. Without attempting an intrinsic classification or approach to threats, I will attempt a brief presentation and analysis of the newest and most important threats of the 21st century that may affect the global security environment, using established methods of scientific research.

Migration – a threat to global security and a widespread social phenomenon

Migration is by far one of the most important social phenomena of the 21st century, which has created the biggest problems for contemporary society. Being a mass phenomenon, very difficult to control, it highlighted the vulnerabilities of Western states, leading to increased risks and threats to regional and global security. The migration phenomenon, resulting from the assault of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, was deeply felt by the tolerance of Western society, migration acts peaking in Central and Western Europe, but also in neighboring Syria (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey).

The refugee crisis in Europe[4] is a politico-social phenomenon triggered by alleged reasons, such as the conflicts in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, the level of poverty and human rights violations in these states. An important moment, when the crisis began to be perceived in its full historical dimension, was April 2015, when at least 5 ships carrying about two thousand immigrants sank in the Mediterranean Sea, an incident that resulted in over 1,200 of victims. Between 2007 and 2011, a large number of undocumented migrants from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia fraudulently crossed the borders between Turkey and Greece, forcing the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union to strengthen border control. The EU also sought to find measures to reduce the flow of migrants. The component states had already taken radical measures, setting up fences at their borders: Hungary on the border with Serbia, Bulgaria on the border with Turkey, the Republic of Macedonia on the border with Greece, Austria on the border with Slovenia. Unlike EU countries, many non-EU countries did not want to receive refugees, an example being Japan. The degree of acceptance towards refugees decreased after it became known that one of the perpetrators of the Paris attacks in November 2015 was an asylum seeker with a Syrian passport. The Visegrád Group states were most vehement against the refugee quotas, mean the division of refugees between EU Member States, as proposed by Germany, Austria and Sweden.

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[2] *Ibidem*, p. 39.
[3] Tomas A.Keaney, Eliot A.Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, Editura Sithosian Libraries, 1993, p. 29.
[4] https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criza_refugia%C8%9Bilor_%C3%AEn_Europa#cite_note-1, accessed on 10.02.2021, at 23.30.

The refugee crisis in Jordan. Jordan received an impressive number of Syrian refugees, primarily for reasons of solidarity plus tribal ties, but also because half of them were already in the country at the time of the crisis. For a country with so few resources, so dependent on foreign aid, with very serious domestic economic problems, the enthusiasm could not last long. Thus, Jordan, a promoter of the Arab fraternity, inheriting, through the Hashemite monarchy, the bloodline with the Prophet Muhammad, and the custody of the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem, behaved as follows: a process of re-evaluating the need for a secure border with Syria, the need to regularize the presence of Syrian refugees on its territory: it received refugees because it had no choice but to try to reduce the shock by promoting the policy of their digital overbidding to obtain international funds and built several refugee camps (with some reluctance and in inhospitable places in the desert, not to repeat the experience of the 70s, when Palestinian camps in the territory of the kingdom were no longer subject to local authority); passed to isolate the Syrian population from the rest of the population, including by continuing to build camps, but also by regulating measures that allow the registration of all refugees and their monitoring; restricted freedom of movement and the right to work, by imposing rules on the issuance of work permits or by the retention by the security forces of personal documents of refugees.

The refugee crisis in Lebanon. Lebanon received several waves of both Palestinian and Syrian refugees. Thus, from the beginning of the influx of Syrian refugees, the problem of building separate camps was raised, local politicians not wanting to repeat the experience of the 70s and 80s, when Palestinian camps were a kind of extraterritorial enclaves, where the law was made by various groups and warring factions. As a result, Syrian refugees in Lebanon did not have an easy life, and their situation worsened. Unlike Jordan, the Syrians who preferred Lebanon did so not because of kinship, clan or near-border housing, the main reason for choosing this country as a destination was a professional relationship, year after year the Syrians crossed the border to work in the fields of the Lebanese economy, where the local labor force is insufficient, primarily in construction, but also in agriculture or services. Thus, when the conflict in Syria began, the seasonal workers came permanently with their families, Lebanon becoming the country with the many Syrian refugees, in relation to the local population. The reaction of the local authorities was not favorable, they only granted the status of displaced persons, because the refugee status would have meant, as in the case of Jordan, the assumption of responsibilities. So, without refugee camps, without the status they should have, Syrian refugees received signals that they were not wanted, they settled only in the open spaces between Lebanese localities, where they built real villages with cardboard walls, plastic or metal plates, without providing the basic facilities of civilization.

The refugee crisis in Iraq. Iraq has a special situation with regard to Syrian refugees, especially in the area of Iraqi Kurdistan, as local authorities do not belong to a state, but to an entity with limited political decision-making rights. Kurdish Syrian refugees from Iraqi Kurdistan began their exodus to the region as the Islamic State terrorist group took control of western Iraq, eastern and northern Syria, a few years after the start of the "Arab Spring." This process worked effectively because, first of all, there was a linguistic communion, the Syrian Kurdish refugees integrated well into the labor market, especially in the construction sector in Kurdistan and, last but not least, the local government, the local political elite, were in a process of state-building in which the strengthening of the ethnic component matters. Therefore, there was no pressure for their departure, on the contrary, their stay was promoted, 80% of the refugees finding a job.

The refugee crisis in Turkey. 64% of Syrian refugees chose Turkey as their destination, in the largest exodus in the country's history. According to the UN specialized agency, 3.6 million Syrians were officially registered earlier this year, and it is very possible that their real number will exceed 4 million. Of course, Turkey is not Jordan or Lebanon, the economy is developed, the infrastructure is much better, the opportunities for newcomers are more numerous. Politically, Ankara has taken a tougher approach to the Damascus regime, which has

encouraged opposition supporters to move north. However, Turkey did not believe that this crisis would exceed the limits of 2011, as entry into Turkey would be visa-free for Syrian citizens. After a while, restrictions appeared for those who came by air or on-board ships. Security checks and the selection of those allowed to enter began. A security fence was erected along the entire border. The refugees had to wait in makeshift camps along the Syrian border to be allowed in, with more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the situation. Turkish officials have criticized negative attitudes towards refugees, lamenting the discrimination, xenophobia and racism of populist politicians and the media, especially in Western countries, which after 2015 paid an important bill to support the economic protection of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

International terrorism, a major threat to the contemporary world

International terrorism is the main source of instability, being the biggest threat to democracy and freedom. If at the beginning of the twentieth century terrorist actions had various causes, these being spread over several ranges of arguments, from ethnic to political, in the twenty-first century we see the interposition of the religious argument. With low intensity during the Cold War, terrorism erupted, increasing in intensity and diversification, culminating in the US attacks on September 11, 2001. The fight against it intensified thereafter, with Western society understanding that the scourge of terror would be used more and more often and the fight against it is paramount.

The major threats to contemporary society have taken various, particularly dangerous forms, of which we summarize the following: amplifying the activity of terrorist networks/groups, organizing and executing terrorist attacks in the main European urban centers; the intensification of terrorist actions directed against Western-type democracies, punctual or large-scale, on targets considered to be of great value, with a strong media impact; the proliferation of punitive or revenge actions against those who launched anti-terrorist campaigns and/or countries that are part of anti-terrorist coalitions; the return to the countries of origin of Europe of trained fighters in various training camps, belonging to terrorist organizations, and the spread among the community of the ideas of Jihad against the US and their allies; the decision of fighters belonging to extremist-terrorist groups to choose the European continent as a zone of refuge and recovery; the resurgence of right-wing extremism, nationalism, xenophobia and revisionism, coupled with anti-Semitic sentiments common to these movements; terrorist actions in cyberspace, in order to create serious disruptions in communication systems; affecting/destroying command/control systems, banking systems; database viruses, creating a state of chaos in information systems; the danger of terrorism arising from the criminalization of life and/or social, political or ethnic dissatisfaction.

In addition, the recalibration of the global terrorist threat generates new risks and fears, as well as tailor-made reactions from the West. More than 16 years after the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York, during which the United States waged a fierce campaign entitled "*Global War on Terror*"[5], we are now witnessing a redefinition of this action, its targets and tactics under the name "*War on Jihadism*"[6]. Most confrontations are not between states; they are asymmetrical, hybrid conflicts, waged by fighters without an obvious affiliation with a state, conflicts for which Western states seem unprepared and which should raise great questions for the entire international community on how to approach them.

The anti-terrorist coalition created and led by the U.S.A. with the support of the N.A.T.O.[7] and other non-member states, initially directed against al-Qaeda and other militant

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[5] *Războiul împotriva terorismului* (cunoscut și ca *Războiul global împotriva terorismului* sau Războiul împotriva terorii) este o campanie militară internațională împotriva terorismului condusă de Statele Unite și Marea Britanie cu sprijinul partenerilor din NATO, dar și a altor țări care nu sunt membre NATO.

[6] AFP: Ministrul apărării german *Ursula von der Leyen* a atras atenția asupra faptului că războiul împotriva grupării jihadiste Statul Islamic (SI) nu s-a încheiat. A subliniat necesitatea de a nu subestima capacitatea membrilor grupării.

[7] Tomas A.Keaney, Eliot A.Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, Sithosian Libraries, 1993, p. 32.

organizations, after this zero moment of modern counterterrorism, led to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Even if the initial goal of the coalition was achieved, the reaction of religious nationalism to the attempt to impose in the area the tiara of a Western democratic society led to the creation of the Islamic State, which was and is the successor to extremist ideologies of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations from Middle East. Modern terrorism, cultivated over the past 20 years by organizations such as the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and beyond, has presented ideological opponents mainly from Europe and North America, but also from other parts of the globe, a variant of violent extremism, put into practice by his followers, with the clear goal of spreading terror and fear and to psychologically influencing the alleged opponent to achieve political and societal goals.

The reaction of modern European society, which has emerged from the wave of terrorist attacks in Europe over the past two decades, has led to the emergence of nationalist, or nationalist-extremist organizations that have tried to exploit this niche in European politics. The approach of nationalist politics in Europe has led to the emergence of new opinion leaders and political parties that have tried to exploit the spectrum of a nationalist approach in relation to the migration phenomenon, as the main source of modern terrorism in the West. However, the balanced approach of European political leaders in terrorism and migration has kept the nationalist current under control, and their attempt to approach nationalism positively, in channeling this current of opinion towards moderate patriotism, seems to restore balance and normalcy in Western society.

The nuclear threat, a threat to world security

The nuclear threat is another scourge that has evolved significantly in the early 21st century, even though the risk of a nuclear war seems to be on a downward slope, due to a balanced approach in the relationship between the major nuclear powers. The development of terrorism has also reached the nuclear level, so that nuclear terrorism seems to be new, due to the fact that the power and financial support of terrorist groups is increasing and the radioactive material is spread worldwide. The danger posed by nuclear terrorism has been neglected over time, and is not considered a threat to global security. The issue of security and security of radioactive material is treated differently on a case-by-case basis, and cracks in its security and protection system are opportunities for those interested in this field. The ideological temptation of terrorism shows that terrorist groups are constantly looking for opportunities to exploit the weaknesses of the opponent and that they would not hesitate to produce a disaster by using weapons of mass destruction if they had access to them. The impact of a terrorist attack with weapons of mass destruction would be major in a crowded urban area. The disaster he left behind would have an almost bankrupt impact on democracy and the freedoms that it offers.

SARS-CoV-2 infection, a threat to public health

The pandemic generated by the spread of SARS-CoV-2 infection on a global scale, in the current security context, has substantially changed the way society relates to daily reality, the issue of major risks and threats globally at this time, being passed on to the spectrum of public health. The risks and threats identified since the beginning of the pandemic have been counteracted by different approaches at each state level, the results obtained not being as expected, but in the near future it is likely that naturally mass immunization or by vaccination will bring the expected result.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a real threat that must be treated with the utmost responsibility, with physical distancing and mass vaccination becoming the most convenient prophylactic methods in all aspects of our social lives, and this is to bring major security changes, threats focusing on the online environment. An unimaginable number of phishing emails related to SARS-CoV-2 infection are now the best known type of cyber attack. Never before, in the online environment, there has

been a diversity of this level in the typology of the attack and such a large number of attempts to compromise the online environment. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are visible, as it represents the worst health crisis of the modern era and, even if kept under control, will cause a global economic crisis, with economic costs shocking. Practically, the global recession is becoming more and more difficult to avoid and is likely to hit everyone indiscriminately: rich countries, emerging economies, poor or developing countries.

The pandemic will remain a threat in the coming years that may influence maintaining global security. Under these conditions, a complex battle is taking place to reconfigure the centers of power, to conquer and maintain political and strategic initiative and, on this basis, cutting-edge technology and strategic domination. Today, strategic partnerships are widely used, which is a new formula for harmonizing interests and preventing major conflicts between major actors, between the nuclei around which the centers of power are established or reconstituted: USA, EU, Russia, China, Japan, India, Arab World. The strategies of these nuclei are very similar, as their policies also have in common at least in terms of desire, will and ability to participate in the new strategic reconfiguration of the world, which leads, in a way, to the creation and maintenance of an environment security in which weapons of mass destruction are kept under control and high-intensity conflicts and wars are prevented.

According to the Alliance's deputy secretary general, NATO considers the coronavirus pandemic crisis a threat to global security. In this sense, mobilizing state resources, especially economic ones, during the pandemic is a lesson learned about future investments in the security system. Countries are facing an exceptional situation, putting the health of the population and the system of interdependent and globalized economies to the test. In a broad sense, it also poses a security problem, we can say even in the purely military sense, having an effect of multiplication and pressure on public opinion, on public services, on the economic side, which is unprecedented. NATO is an organization whose main purpose is to defend and protect against potential security risks, and this pandemic is a different security risk, but no less dangerous and insidious, which must be treated as such[8].

Conclusion

The security system of the future is a materialization of current risks and threats. No one today doubts the metamorphoses that have occurred, are occurring and will occur in the future, the presence, in one form or another, of threats of all kinds on society, the economic and military system. Security threats will be significantly extended in non-military areas. This is imposed by the new types of threats and vulnerabilities, by the huge gaps that exist in the world and are amplifying day by day, by the deep crisis (political, economic, social and moral) that is developing asymmetrically and chaotically[9].

The accelerated development of the online environment will influence social life and interpersonal interaction and thus obsolete by social networks and will create new threats to maintain the level of normalcy in interpersonal relationships. Today's world is making us more and more aware of the fact that we cannot ensure our security, as a mandatory state for progress and prosperity, without the one next to us and in no case against it. We are increasingly dependent on each other, we need shared solidarity to combat threats to our future. A number of issues (political, economic, security, cultural, demographic, ethnic and religious) can be much better addressed and resolved in a relatively homogeneous framework, where there is some cohesion and a common experience of development.

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[8] http://www.rador.ro/2020/03/31/nato-considera-criza-generata-de-pandemia-de-coronavirus-o-amenintare-la-ad resa-securitatii-globale, accessed on 29.10.2020.
[9] Flanagan S., Frost E., Kugler R., *Challanges of the Global Century*, Report of the Projection Globalisation and National Security, Washington, 2001, p. 11.

With regard to the Syrian refugee crisis, most of Syria's neighboring states, which initially showed their support and solidarity, have begun to adopt an attitude of rejection of the continued presence of Syrian refugees on their territories, have promoted measures to persuade them to leave, either back in Syria or elsewhere, anywhere. Moreover, it was decided to close temporary camps, the right to work was restricted, refugee communities were isolated inside through bureaucratic and administrative measures that made the lives of refugees increasingly difficult. Local government policy is becoming visibly hostile to the presence of refugees, forced repatriations are beginning, with the refusal to sign documents on international refugee protection legislation, an extremely controversial issue, especially in Amman, which had to deal with Palestinian refugees.

Regions can provide a favorable framework for establishing cooperation mechanisms that contribute to the international security climate. However, even if after the end of the Cold War, since the second half of the last decade, in order to eliminate misperceptions and combat threats to common security in the world, a large number of mechanisms of cooperation have developed conflicts, geopolitical instability and the COVID-19 pandemic endanger global security. Thus, the pandemic changed and transformed in a while everything on earth, degrading the economic situation, restricting daily life, and under the pressure of current circumstances the IT security strategy must change as it goes.

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