SECURITY ENVIRONMENT – QUALITATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF OLD CHALLENGES

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The accurate reporting of the state by the security environment is a crucial issue concerning the status and its development on the international stage. The determinants of security environment are constructed often on variables with extremely wide evolution range, in which states can still act mostly random and unpredictable.

The number of environmental determinants of security continues to change, new factors may occur at any time: therefore, the reporting of the environmental security must be made in real time. The economy, Knowledge, along with other parameters which traditionally influence the security environment, such as geographical boundaries, domestic and foreign policies characteristics, are suffering themselves changes/conversions under the impulse of technological development but also due to the depletion of natural resources and the rise of environmental issues. The development of informational technology propels us into informational era, giving new meanings to all these parameters and raising new challenges to the environmental security.

Keywords: *security environment; economy; knowledge; geographical barriers; technological development; informational technology; information era.*

Most approaches to the *security environment* refer to what seem to be its *current* characteristics, with very few of them trying to identify formative factors. As a rule one speaks of *security environment traits, security environment characteristics* etc. What was usually mostly debated was the concept of *security*, or furthermore *international security*. After the Second World War the concept of *international security* was closely tied to the *realpolitik* of relations between the two superpowers, aiming at maintaining equilibrium whilst reasonably satisfying the interests of both and their allies. Later on, when relations thawed with the disappearance of the USSR, the

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definition and scope of security gained new extensions, encompassing a larger array of threats to peace and stability, including the ones ensuing from changes to the environment, associated with resource depletion and pollution.

What is the *security environment* though?

One the most comprehensive definitions states that: *the security environment is a system, resulting from the dynamic interactions between a multitude of factors[1]*. The systemic nature of the *security environment* requires a correlated approach, by conducting a *systemic analysis* that would lead to its proper understanding. One assumes that for any state a rational approach demands a close correlation of its security strategy with its *security environment*. This entails following at least three stages: evaluation (*of the security environment*), planning and implementing. Often, in trying to define a states security strategy and its results, analysts tend to *compress* the three stages or to refer to the last two alone of the aforementioned. Thus, most of the time, failures in correctly tackling security issues are attributed to incorrect planning and implementation, regarding the conditions and transformations in the security environment as self obvious and implicitly understood by decision makers. Usually the possibility that states, or their governing factors to be more precisely, would have difficulties in truly understanding the security environment is disregarded as most bothersome things are. For example it is currently taken as a postulate that classic threats, classic conflicts respectively are highly unlikely. Using this assumption as a fundament certain responses to security issues are planned and implemented, with extremely important implications regarding the number, structure, equipment and training of military forces. Is equipment and most of all training focused on the so called *asymmetric warfare* truly the correct answer to the real security environment? Is there a thorough analysis on which these assumptions are based, or are they *evident, self obvious* and especially in accord with what *others* say? What if the parameters of these others *security environment* are different? Without overlooking planning and implementation flaws, the correct understanding and evaluation of the security environment are paramount for a systemic analysis of security issues and are, at the same time, the key elements for the success of any security policy. Correct and realistic understanding of the *security environment* will ensure the proper inputs for the next steps of action. Thus it becomes a matter of *understanding the problem of understanding the security environment[2]*!

Drawing a conclusion upon some studies of the field the security environment is determined by the following factors:

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[1] *Shiping Tang – A Systemic Theory of the Security Environment*
[2] *Ibidem.*

- Geographic boundaries;
- Interactions between states, with two components,
  - *Internal evolution* – aggregating *power[3]*;
  - *External behavior – the capacity for self-restraint[4]*;
- International hierarchy and structures;
- Technology (military).[5]

The weight and actuality of the listed factors are in a continuous change though. Geographic boundaries for example, have played a significant role over the course of time and although their importance has declined at present they are still of actuality. We can assume though that, not too long from now, with the *globalization of the capabilities[6]* of combat systems, their role will diminish considerably. As a consequence it is imperative that factors analysis is a *real time* process. Of course the real challenge is analyzing the interaction between the previously mentioned factors.

It is my opinion though that no theory can offer sufficiently powerfully prediction mechanisms to reach certainties in the analysis of the security environment and especially in predictions about its evolution.

If we examine the previously mentioned factors, that model the security environment, we observe that each of them is a variable with a large domain of fluctuation, in which states may still act randomly. Furthermore, I believe that the number of governing factors for the security environment is constantly changing, with the permanent possibility of new factors emerging.

Changes in the natural environment including the decrease in natural resources or limiting access to vital resources represent elements that influence the security environment. Environment factors, closely tied to political, economic, sociological, cultural factors often play an important part in the appearance and evolution of conflicts[7].

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[3] *Internal evolution* refers to a states capacity to singlehandedly assume its security by aggregating power through concentrating all resources and actions on a national level.

[4] *External behaviour* illustrates the capacity and reactions of the state to the transformations of the security environment around it, the way its reaction serves its interests or not. The capacity for self-restraint is a defining element for a state, showing its degree of aggressiveness. Considering that a states external behaviour depends upon its position in international hierarchies and structures (relative distribution of power)

[5] *End reference*

[6] Developing and extending aerial/ spatial surveillance, increasing precision and developing new long range weapon systems etc.

[7] "… when resources are scarce – whether energy, water or arable land – our fragile ecosystems become strained, as do the coping mechanisms of groups and individuals. This can lead to a breakdown of established codes of conduct, and even outright conflict.", *UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon.*

It follows that changes in the natural environment, particularly diminishing natural resources regardless of what these are, represent new determining factors of the security environment, that tend to surpass the aforementioned ones, as nature and resources degrade and ebb to a greater extent.

In the end, *the security environment has to be the reference system for the behavior of any national or international entity, in relation to which it aspires to develop in, at the very least, acceptable parameters of liberty, given the conditions of a climate of minimum conflict.* This is if conflict itself is not part of its own development strategy.

We can postulate that none of the determining factors of the security environment can decisively influence it on its own. Nonetheless, there have to be elements that originate the changes in the balance between these factors and that, as a consequence, constitute the engine that drives the evolution of the security environment. What are these? Why are states propelled in stating their internal environment, in what direction do they aggregate power and for what purpose? What leads to crossing, pushing geographic boundaries? Who inflicts international rules and for what purpose? Is the evolution of the security environment linear, ascending, in what concerns the number and value of determining factors as well as in their complexity and balance? Could a certain cyclicity be identified to this evolution and could we identify those elements we mentioned earlier by a process of reducing this cycle? These are questions we should naturally ask and find answers to when analyzing the security environment.

Portraying the *economy* as the only constant determining factor of the security environment would be a simplistic, unilateral approach. This is because *the human factor*, in its complexity, is frequently the source of spectacular and often unpredictable developments of the security environment. "The human need for self respect"[8] is also an instability factor, generating unending global changes, being driven by desire for power that is incumbent on force, economic supremacy and knowledge.

Of course, the evolution of human society, social, politic and even ethic restraints, diminishes or amends the essence of the previously shown phenomenon. Still, I think that its milestone value remains, even out of the consideration that even the most democratic and "collective" decision of a group actually stems from the decisive influence of an individual. It is so that referring to the most intimate drives of the evolution of human society will enlighten essential aspects regarding the security environment and the

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[8] F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* – appeals to the ideas of Kant and the dialectic of Hegel: every human has this need, once it is satisfied it resurfaces only on a higher level.

mechanics behind its transformations. The lieder, be it a person or a group, is the *administrator* of power, the one that *aggregates internal capabilities* and determines *external reactions* and implicitly the *capacity for self-restraint* of the entity he governs.

Knowledge has always been and shall remain a *means* of power amplification and so, indirectly, a way to influence the security environment. It was always intertwined with force and wealth to give birth to power. Knowledge is "aspired to" and used by power to make decisions and multiply wealth and force. More knowledge, more wealth and force. *Materializing knowledge* implies *developing technology*, including military technology. *Technological development* is the one that *blurs* natural borders and diminishes their role, offers solutions to the economy but also instruments of force to the administrators of power, generating reactions outside of social or national entities in accordance with the imposition of their interests upon other actors. If we consider the other dimension of *knowledge*, usually known as *intelligence*, which fundamentally streamlines any process by giving the *when, how, with what and where* one must act, we conclude that this is another factor that continues to influence the security environment.

The role of *knowledge*, including the spectacular evolutions in the way military conflicts have unfolded in the past years is well known. Technology and information domination have exponentially amplified the military power of those who mastered and wielded them.

The recent developments in the *information technology* have led to substantial changes globally, leading to the *information age* and *society*. *Information technology* is practically the cornerstone, the DNA of the *information society*.

I find that the information age is not yet a global phenomenon, but rather a phenomenon with global effects. This is, for the simple reason, that knowledge is "aspired" by power. A vast part of the world is still in the pre-industrial age, illiteracy is high and the ability to profit from the advantages of technology is not yet in the reach of a large chunk of the world's population. This those not mean that this part of the world and its population is not subject to the information age, but sadly this most often leads to increasing the disparity, under all its forms, to the powerful.

If we were to *merge* the visible effects of the information age on society, the closest image would be that of a complex machine, whose gears inexorably spin with an ever increasing speed, following ever more precise rules, centrifuging everything that those not abide by these rules. In such a

world, the winners seem to be *the organizations, the entities based on information*, who have found ways to adapt to the challenges of the information age by efficiently and timely using it. *Information based organizations*, as successful organizations, are practically the result of a *coevolution*[9] in the business world[10].

In conclusion, crossing into the information age and society deeply shapes the security environment both by its positive features and by the new challenges to security it brings.

The reflection of technological development in the military domain, particularly the development of the information technology, is without a doubt a new dimension of the Military Technical Revolution (MTR). Above anything else, in my opinion, the Military Technical Revolution is an endless race between technological progress and conceptual and organizational development and adaptation.

The crucial point so that technological progress, the development of weapon systems and operational innovation will transform into a Military Revolution is the capacity for adaptation and innovation of organizations.

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[9] *Coevolution*, as a concept, derives from complex adaptive systems theory and states that in biology after a certain number of reproductive cycles species adapt and influence each other in their evolutionary process.

[10] David S. Alberts, John J. Garstka, Frederick P. Stein*, NETWORK CENTRIC WARFARE: Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority.*