

## TYOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS

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**Abstract:** *The article briefly presents the probable types of threats directed against the national interest of states in the current geopolitical and geostrategic context at zonal, regional and international/global levels as well as depending on the internal situation of the state.*

**Keywords:** *security; threat; conventional; unconventional; state actors.*

Upon the dawn of the new millennium, the threats that emerged addressed to the security of the individual up to that of society as a whole are intensely multiplied and diversified as compared to the ages in which armed power dominated the internal social system, through revolutions and social conflicts, as well as the international system. This is the reason why we cannot operate with a distinctive set of ranking criteria for the unanimously accepted threats, especially when defining them also involves a political factor. When we operate with different means of categorizing or hierarchically ranking the threats to security, we need to establish where they actually stem from – the political or the scientific domains.

Function of the number of reference systems operated with, the typology of threats can be more complex or simpler. We consider that a quite complex taxonomy of threats can be made taking into account the nature of the threat (*classical/conventional or non-classical/unconventional*), the target set (*its nature and characteristics*), the amplitude, the intensity, the history of the threat and its perception.

Several times we operate with a criterion – *the nature of the threat* – used nowadays almost incessantly. According to this criterion, threats can be *classical/conventional*, especially those associated with the conflicting

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behavior of some states and *non-classical/unconventional*, associated to international security organizations, better said, to the non-state actors of the international security environment.

We consider that a reference system very little used is the one which takes into account the nature and characteristics of the „*target*”, which can actually, if used, allow us to obtain an adequate perception of threats. From this perspective, threats are political, societal, identity-related, military, economic, energetic, ecological, and of other sorts.

Another criteria that we can use in order to categorize a threat is its *intensity*. From this point of view, we may find threats lacking organization (spread everywhere or only in certain areas, completely dissipated), which are out of the ordinary, minor or major.

Part of the specialists in the security domain consider that, taking into account this criterion, the threats to security can be characterized by *proximity, probability of occurrence, specificity, consequences and historical setting*<sup>1</sup>.

Among the threats to security that society is confronting nowadays, most of them are quite blurred, hidden, and only vaguely defined.

Another criterion which we can use in order to categorize a threat, re-activated by the emergence of non-state actors, is the *historic criterion*. Nowadays we are dealing with both classical and asymmetric threats, among which a threat is represented by terrorism which is actually a classical threat as well.

Taking into account the *amplitude* of the threat manifestations, threats can be zonal, regional, or international/global.

According to the opinions expressed by some specialists and political analysts, we are facing, on the one hand, threats whose existence can be brought to the public awareness (they can be identified/ seen) and, on the other hand, threats whose existence is hard to fathom, coming from the natural environment (such as earthquakes and natural disasters).

In our opinion, threats to security are considered only those that are caused by the conflicting behavior of state actors / societies or specific groups of people. We consider that there are no threats to the individual,

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<sup>1</sup> Hlihor, Constantin, Politici de securitate în mediul internațional contemporan, vol.1-Domeniul energetic, Editura U.N.Ap. „Carol I”, București, 2007, p.76.

community, nation, outside human will. They act in accordance with the aim of reaching a certain goal, generally speaking, ensuring their security, especially in circumstances dictated by the will and the interest of the *other*.

As an entity is developing its security system, to another entity whom the former has no relations of cooperation or neutrality with, this may constitute a threat. In our opinion, earthquakes need to be associated to dangers. We do not believe that nature has as a purpose hurting people.

Another criteria which in our view might be important in characterizing and ranking threats to security is *perception*. Perception can act when we deal with threats occurring due to the human action and decision, at individual or collective level.

In case of state actors, ethnic groups, religious groups and so on, perceptions are especially influenced by stereotypes, historic psycho-fixations, as well as the manner in which they mutually perceive political, social, moral, and religious interests and values. In our opinion what is an object of interest or a value for a country / people / group may be a threat for another country / people / group.

At the beginning of this millennium, the mutations that happened at the level of international security environment caused radical changes with respect to the forms of manifestation of different threats to state security.

Given the zonal, regional, and international geopolitical and geostrategic context, as well as the internal situation of the states, the probable threats directed against the national interests and values of states may be grouped, in our opinion, in internal, external, and combined actions.

***The threats to states' security produced due to internal actions*** are those threats produced by all the hostile manifestations, actions and acts directed against constitutional order. In our view, they represent concealed acts of war conducted by elements hostile to society that use diversion and diversionist fighting methods, procedures and techniques (destabilization, intimidation, destruction) in order to reach the goal settled, carried out in time and space, with trained personnel, with adequate means that are highly effective technically.

These internal actions incorporate a wide range of manifestations conducted within the state's borders, meant to affect the democratic or

fundamental values of the country, or to revise the state borders or, in some situations, to gain control over certain territories within the country.

Preventing and countering these actions need to be made through measures adapted to the intensity and the spatial and temporal amplitude of these threats, measures that might ensure limiting the effects at the level of security and the functioning of the rule of law according to the renown values.

Internal security needs to be able to face the threats that are manifested through the different shapes taken by crime: people trafficking, drug trafficking, economic and IT fraud, theft, corruption and so on.

The emergence and proliferation of *unconventional threats* to state security favored by the internal conditions in the respective country are based, especially, on the factors from the political, social, and legal domain.

In politics, the conditions for the emergence and proliferation of *unconventional threats* are given by the following aspects: lack of consistency in establishing priority economic goals, the lack of strategy for creating a financial system adapted to the market economy; the political interest in gaining full control over certain profitable economic domains; protecting certain group interests by restraining economic activities performed by economic competitors; closing certain treaties, conventions through which customs and import facilities are imposed to the detriment of Romanian products; institutionalizing corruption by drawing or adopting normative regulations that annihilates frauds or that allow conducting economic practices and unfair competition.

Within the social realm, it has to be remarked at the same time that the unprecedented dynamism of the general framework for debate within Romanian society has also generated a series of new dangers with different potential degrees but equally detrimental through the effects they generate to the good functioning of society. These are for instance the hesitant reactions of certain state institutions confronted with the tendencies of increasing the crime rate and disturbance of public order with direct effects on diminishing social cohesion and solidarity; the ever obvious increase of the difference between the categories of population regarding the standard of living; the unwillingness to abide by ecological norms and environment protection, favoring the occurrence of natural catastrophes; the emigration

of specialists from various top domains, a phenomenon that significantly affects the potential for development of the Romanian society.

Within the economic field, the constantly high rate of serious economic crime (smuggling, tax evasion, embezzlement, fraudulent accounting), the institutionalization of certain harmful economic programs in the field of privatization, the restructuring of industrial sectors (mining, chemical industry, machine building) and agriculture, as well as the faulty regulation of some economic activities such as the VAT, excise duty, subsidies for certain products or services, allowing spacing out compulsory payments to state budget, they are all favoring factors for the emergence and development of organized crime activities. All these are added the serious fraud in the field of oil product trade, failing to return to the country the foreign currency generated by the export activity, sending outside the country some foreign currency sums justified by know-know import, external services etc.

The conditions created by the legal domain, referring to the emergence and proliferation of the phenomenon described above are generated by the following aspects: the existence of legal provisions or criminal procedures limiting the possibilities of action of investigation bodies; the abrogation of certain regulations leading to legal voids which, in turn, led to decreasing the authority of the law-enforcement institutions, at the same time impeding upon the finality of the act of justice; deficiencies of perception and implementation of the specific legislation referring to classified information.

The internal weaknesses of the state in the transition period for applying social reform seem to be the most dangerous elements for society. Within this frame, the confrontations in the political area and the material hardships encountered by the population are constituted as the main sources of instability and tensions of the internal climate.

We may say that there are other worrisome elements such as the restauration tendencies, economic recession, social disruption and insecurity, unemployment, corruption, organized crime, terrorism, illegal migration, separatist actions, unprecedented proliferation of religious sects, etc. They are added to the phenomena and practices specific to

psychological and information aggression whose purpose is directed towards disinformation, creating confusion, discouraging and manipulation of the population and the decision factors, resulting in weakening psychological and moral resilience, disrupting the activity of certain state structures, inducing confusion and uncertainty in the society, undermining the activity of legitimate bodies of the authorities and misleading and manipulating public opinion, etc.

All these aspects result in lowering the quality of the social environment, exacerbating the manifestations specific for the strife for better living, proliferation of the lack of culture and a serious crisis of values and morality. This is the background against which other phenomena appear, namely the feeling of national identity and dignity is clearly diminished, there is an obvious polarization and separating the population into distanced layers according to their income (some resulting from illicit activities), affecting social and national solidarity. One should not leave out the negative role played by the manipulation of opinions and behavior of the ordinary citizen through specific means which, corroborated with the „tensions” of the political fight, the serious social and economic lack of balance, the disagreements and even confrontations caused by inter-ethnic and religious issues, only manage to cause, at the level of the society, a climate of profound unrest.

***The threats to state security caused by external actions*** have a wide range of manifestations, starting from espionage in different areas of interest and ending up with aggressive actions meant to destabilize the constitutional order of a state, to affect national interests and the democratically constituted state institutions. In order to do that, perpetrators use terrorist-diversionist techniques and procedures (usually destabilization, intimidation, destruction etc.) in order to reach the goal set, actions conducted in a certain time and space with highly trained people and adequate technical means.

Among external threats, we may also mention protectionist practices, the limited access to financial capital markets and state-of-the-art technologies, the biases of foreign investors, the discriminating practices in weapon trade, conditioning the promotion of certain vital interests of the Romanian state by the acceptance of political concessions and other disadvantageous circumstances.

*The threats to state security caused by combined actions* are those threats produced by actions commonly manifested by native elements with aggressive external forces against the national interests of a state in order to destabilize the rule of law, occupy and conquer, partially and temporarily, the national territory.

In our opinion, the forms of manifestation of the main asymmetric / unconventional threats are the following: asymmetric and asynchronous methods skillfully used; the surprising aspects of technology that may confer circumstantial advantages unanticipated by the great military powers; the stakes set by the quantitative capacity combined with the situational advantages (initiative, limited objectives, short lines of communication, known terrain, enough time for laying out and preparing the battle positions); the use of weapons of mass destruction, of missiles and special operation forces; subversion and combined types of terrorism; the building of aerial capacities of air defense, missiles, land and naval mines, procuring weapons of mass destruction and missiles with longer action range; the use of advanced potential of command, control, training, maintenance, the use of the advanced potential of command and control, training, maintenance, classified information and reconnaissance, of managing the favorable situational conditions and circumstances; the conflict of the great regional military powers, conducted with numerous „hybrid” forces against the great powers of the world, having as support advanced lethal technologies and the possible alliances and conditions established regionally; the use of military force and violence; stability and support operations; drug trafficking and other criminal actions with implications for national security; simultaneous operations (the network effect of some or even many conditions and circumstances).

Every aspect presented above is completed with the possible effects caused by the revisionism and retaliation policy promoted by some circles abroad that may give rise to inter-ethnic tensions and religious intolerance, most of them with a pronounced artificial character, with the obvious purpose of rendering as autonomous certain areas of the national territory and taking them out of the jurisdiction and subsequently the sovereignty of the Romanian state. In addition, we cannot ignore those derived from the

relatively peripheral status of the country within the European Community and the prolongation, for Romania only, of the consequences of the Ribbentrop – Molotov Pact. Therefore, by corroborating the entire spectrum of threats to national security we could trace the types of hostile actions and aggressions that the Romanian state might face: ample and serious terrorist actions, separatist actions involving the use of armed forces, trans-border threats, corruption, etc.

In our view, the variety of forces whose actions can be considered unconventional threats to security is remarkable. Among these we may include the following: spies paid by states or international organizations acting in the economic, military, diplomatic, scientific domain etc.; terrorists who use violence to accomplish different goals (political, economic, military, ethnic, religious); guns traffickers, strategic materials, drugs, ammunition, military equipment traffickers acting in their own interest or the interest of certain organizations or states; hackers trying to take advantage of the bases of financial or commercial systems and of world capital market break the codes and the systems of information security, to their own interest, but especially within destabilizing terrorist acts, they literally infect and disrupt the functioning of defense computers; business men that use corruption and bribery in order to manipulate state officials, parliament members, governments, for the personal benefit or the benefit of some over-state organizations; diplomats working in the interest of certain foreign entities; racketeers, usually former Afghan fighters or former soldiers in different occupation troops in Europe who get involved in acts of looting, killings, mugging, endangering social order, and economy, causing chaos, propagating violence, terror, fear, blackmailing different people, money extortion for “ensuring protection”; money laundering organizations or dirty financial entities endangering the security of a country’s banking system; guerillas; mobsters undertaking a great variety of illicit activities, being organized in mob-type associations; armed „revolutionaries”; mercenaries; cartels – criminal organizations (terrorist, professional, ethnical etc.), religious movements and other non-national forces; special operation forces; pressure groups and groups aiming at destabilizing the relations with other states.

We consider that among the specific means used by the entities whose actions can be characterized as unconventional threats to security we

might include the following: electronic surveillance equipment; crafted armament, including weapons of mass destruction; plastic explosives; long-range action missiles; space weapons; electro-dynamic weapons; non-lethal weapons; terrorist technology; nanotechnology; applied biotechnologies; camouflage means, means of concealment, hiding, control, denial, disinformation; means used for environment alteration.

It is essential to keep under control the potential of these threats to state security, which can only be done through a correct and timely assessment as far as they are concerned.

The adequate assessment of the potential of threats to state security needs going through certain stages such as: identifying and describing the threats; establishing certain „retaliation” strategies or strategies of „employment”, for certain situations; evaluating the respective legal framework.

The conditions that need to be taken into account in order to achieve an adequate assessment and an efficient management of threats are the following: assessing the chances of controlling threats; elaborating methods regarding the study of threats, models which might facilitate following their evolution; following the processes that might be triggered and the states that might be generated by the threats; the relations that may be developed, on the one hand, between the threat generating sources and, on the other hand, between the threat themselves; creating an integrated system capable of following the evolution of risks and threats and inform all decision-making factors.

Just as we stated above, depending on their nature, the threats directed towards state security can be social, ethnic, religious, political, information, psychological, or they can be a combination of these. Similarly, it is impossible not to take into account the environment they stem from, namely internal or external.

As Romania is right at a crossroad of conflicting interests, having in its vicinity frozen conflicts that may be refueled at any time, needs to identify with clarity and right judgement the threats to state security and perform a timely and correct assessment of these threats in order to be able to efficiently manage the situation.

Our country needs to be able to protect its system of solutions and guarantees, starting from the potential it has available, relying on its own forces as well as on the support provided by its strategic partner and by some Euro-Atlantic states in order to protect its interests and national values.



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