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Threat as the derminant of safety

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THREAT AS THE DETERMINANT OF SAFETY

Abstract:

Man's life depends on many factors of social and biological character. Among numerous dangers the majority is the side effect of human civilisation thus, it is strongly connected with human life activity, morality, pro and anti social attitudes and behaviours in all important parts of existence such as: culture, politics, science, economy. Some threats however cannot be unambiguously assigned to human activity. The awareness that man is not able to set himself free from those threats, that they are included into human and environment nature, has become common.

The author analyses the term 'threat' from different perspectives introducing a thesis that it implies adequate type of security.

Key words: *human being, danger, contemporary threats, security awareness*

Introduction

The XX-th century marked itself by broadening fields of human activity all around the world thanks to science and technology illimitable development, as in the previous centuries. As the effect of multi-horizontal development acceleration has appeared in many fields of life. People have their own problems, and so far they were able to close them within some borders however, the new character of globalisation has made them global: all old and new problems, generated by new kinds of systems. The world is extremely complicated, that is why it is difficult to clearly define certain groups of main problems and threats.

Theoretical dimension of threat

Specified system of mutual relations between human beings and the surrounding world can be successful for some kind of activity and unfortunate for the other. If the inner balance of a normal situation is disturbed and destroys the natural way of basic activity, and the probability of the task fulfilment becomes lesser, we can talk about difficult situations (situation of isolation, overloading, hindering, conflict or threat). The situation of threat appears when there is higher probability of violation of some values, respected by acting entity, life, health, property, rights, social status, one's good name, work, views, good frame of mind or self-evaluation and many others related to entity or his/her next-of-kin¹. We should keep in mind subjective and objective aspects of threat. Subjective is always the way of threat perception, which may become obsession in extreme cases. While objective side of threat is the existence of disadvantageous and dangerous for certain entity factors.

From the linguistic point of view threat is defined as a situation during which we deal with something dangerous or menacing², the state or situation, which threatens us with something or in which we feel as being in danger³. Threatening, means menacing, announcing something under a threat, creating a state of danger, becoming dangerous to somebody⁴. Feeling threatened, means scared by something

The term threat is understood as, on one hand, a certain psychological or awareness state caused by seeing facts evaluated subjectively as disadvantageous or dangerous, on the other hand, objective factors which cause states of uncertainty or fear⁵. Another definition describes threat as a situation, in which arises the probability of state dangerous for the surrounding⁶. Threat is

¹ See: T. Tomaszewski (red.), *Psychologia*, Warsaw 1975, p. 34-35.

² See: *Słownik Języka Polskiego*, Warsaw 1981, T. III, p. 907.

³ See: *Inny Słownik Języka Polskiego*, Warsaw 2000, p. 1213.

⁴ See: S. Skorupka, H. Auderska, Z. Łempicka (edited), *Mały Słownik Języka Polskiego*, Warsaw 1989, p. 965.

⁵ S. Korycki, *System bezpieczeństwa Polski*, Warsaw 1994, p. 54, quoted on: *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Warsaw 2002, p. 162.

⁶ Ibidem.

also a situation in which higher probability of losing life, health, freedom or possessing appears. It causes anxiety or fear with different level of intensity from horror to incapacitation or instinctive or aware desire of counteracting. Threat may result from natural reasons (e.g. environment influence) or being caused by other men (e.g. enemy)⁷. Thus, threat can be the effect of external factors combination as well as an inner state of human being⁸.

Similar interpretation of the term threat can be found in other languages. In English language *danger* is the chance that somebody or something may be hurt, damaged or killed that something bad may happen. A doer is a person or thing, which may cause hurt or pain⁹. In German language *Bedrohung* is significant threat of causing harm of object – man, company, item or violation of legal system¹⁰. The term is similarly defined in Russian language. Threat (*угроза*) is a portent of committing evil, causing trouble to whoever or whatever. It is also a danger, possibility of appearing of something unpleasant and hard¹¹.

The situation which may lead to damage is also described as a threat to man. When talking about damage usually mostly the damage of losing life, health or possessions is taken into consideration. However, it is not only damage which may appear in relation with threat. The following kinds of damage should be distinguished:

- physical, referring to permanent or temporary detriment of health or health breakdown e.g. body harm, illness, suffer or discomfort,
- related to psyche e.g. resulting in a negative perceiving of oneself, unpleasant feelings such as fear, shame or feeling guilty and disorders in behaviour,
- in the scope of social relations connected with appearing disadvantageous

⁷ *Leksykon wiedzy wojskowej*, Warsaw 1979, p. 510.

⁸ See: T. Tomaszewski (edited), *Psychologia...*, op. cit., p. 34-35.

⁹ Oxford Wordpower, *Słownik angielsko-polski, polsko-angielski*, Oxford 2007, p. 193.

¹⁰ *Langenscheidts Großwörterbuch. Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, Berlin-München-Wien-Zürich-New York 1998, p. 127.

¹¹ С.И. Ожегов, Н.Ю. Шведова, *Толковый словарь русского языка*, Москва 2003, p. 825.

interpersonal relations such as discrimination, stigmatisation, ostracism or ruining one's good name,

- legal, such as: warning, arrest or trial,
- material, connected with direct or indirect economic loss,
- related to dignity, referring to violation of privacy and customs¹².

Sociological perspective of human threat when the society enters the phase of 'late modernity'¹³ is very interesting – new forms of risk appear. Undoubtedly, risk is an everlasting and common factor of social life and it has taken new quality in 'a risk society'. Not the risk in contact with environment, but the risk in contact with civilisation and technical surrounding created by man is brought to the forefront. We live in the world of 'produced risk', which is the price of civilisation and technical development. It is hard to define and gets out of control not only by average man but also experts. We cannot release from it or even effectively protect from it, we have to live with its presence¹⁴.

The term threat usually appears accompanied by adjectives. It may be extraordinary, potential, remarkable, occupational threat.

As an extraordinary threat should be understood the one that was caused by a sudden event, which is not a natural disaster, and results in significant devastation of environment or worsens its state together with common danger for human and environment¹⁵. It is also an unexpected and difficult or dangerous situation, especially an accident, which suddenly appears and needs quick

¹² Quoted on: *Ethical and Policy Issues Involving Human Participants*. Volume I. Report and Recommendations of the Bioethics advisory Commission, Bethesda, 2001, p. 71-72, [in:] M. Czarkowski, *Zagrożenie, ryzyko i szkoda w badaniach klinicznych*, Warsaw 2005.

¹³ The concept of so called 'late modernity' is developed together by a few authors: Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash, Ulrich Beck. They come from conclusion that modernity has not passed yet but appears presently in the most expressive forms. Even though its new surprising shapes are different they do not mean breaking with the past but rather with full manifestation of the previous tendencies. „We do not enter into a new period of post-modernity but rather the century when the consequences of modernity are more universal and radical than ever before” – Giddens claims, source: A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1994, p. 3.

¹⁴ See: P. Sztompka, *Socjologia. Analiza społeczeństwa*, Kraków 2010, p. 575-577.

¹⁵ See: The act on Environmental Protection of 31 January 1980 Journal of Laws from 1980 no 3, item 6, art. 104.

counteraction¹⁶, as well as phenomenon or events threatening human health, life and taking place in a massive way on a large area causing huge material and sanitary loss. xxx

Potential significant threat for human or animals health or natural environment is described as a situation when there is a high probability that the usage of veterinary medicine might influence human or animals health or natural environment; important in this context is the threat which may cause death, threat of life, sizeable disability or handicap, inborn defect or hospitalisation, or may cause such effects by polluting natural environment¹⁷. While potential significant threat for public health is defined as a situation in which there is a high probability of remarkable influence on public health caused by medicine for people¹⁸.

The terms remarkable threat and occupational threat are described as follows. Remarkable threat is a threat which may cause significant and irreversible health damage or death, especially while fulfilling very dangerous tasks¹⁹. Occupational threat is a state of work environment which may cause an accident or illness²⁰.

Threat as a physical or social phenomenon causes a state of uncertainty and fear thus violates feeling of safety²¹. As the feeling of safety refers to all fields of human life and activity creating multidimensional vector of psychological comfort of people who feel safe therefore, the threats of such safety include all phenomena which take such comfort away in particular parts of

¹⁶ *English Language Dictionary*, The University of Birmingham 1990.

¹⁷ See: art. 1 paragraph.19 and 20 directives 2001/82/WE, p. 33.

¹⁸ See: art.29 section 1 and 2 d 2001/83/WE, March 2006, 2006/C 133/05, p 6.

¹⁹ Norm PN-N 180001:2004, *Systemy zarządzania bezpieczeństwem i higieną pracy. Wymagania*.

²⁰ Ministry of Work and Social Policy Regulation from 26 September 1997 of general regulations of work security and hygienic, *Journal of Laws* 2003, no 169, item 1650.

²¹ Wider: R. Rosa, *Problemy bezpieczeństwa w myśli społecznej i wojskowej*, Warsaw 1996, p. 244-245; A. Wawrzusiszyn, *Poczucie bezpieczeństwa funkcjonariuszy Straży Granicznej*, *Biuletyn Centralnego Ośrodka Szkolenia Straży Granicznej im. Marszałka Polski Józefa Piłsudskiego w Koszalinie*, 3/2010, Koszalin 2010, p. 34-46.

life or activity or in their different configurations²².

In relation to mentioned above, a significant meaning is given to the feeling of threat caused by dynamics and scope of political, social and economic changes including: crisis of state and economy, fight for power, dropping deeper values by authority elite, lack of reasonable and long-term social politics Abased on universal values and justice, equality of chances, solidarity and conformity²³.

The feeling of threat satisfies the needs of safety: the higher it is the lower is the satisfaction, and the other way round. The feeling of threat increases when appearing danger is unjustified, excessive, too often treated as personal (referring to acting human being)²⁴.

Threat classification

Globalisation is a complicated and very broad process that has an influence on all the scopes of life. It means creating a new type of connections between companies, states and societies. What is more, it also modifies in a significant way the basic parameters of international order²⁵. It leads to a weakening of the defensive function of state borders, and in the same time, weakening state authority on its own territory and inhabitants. This remark mostly refers to such transborder and trans-sector threats, which do not result from human activity (intentional and purposeful). Such a kind of threat includes (analysed by Chatham House, one of the most influential research institute dealing among the others with economic and political science research²⁶):

²² Wider: B. Wiśniewski, S. Zalewski (edited), *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne RP w ujęciu systemowym i zadań administracji publicznej*, Bielsko-Biała 2006.

²³ S. Korycki, *System bezpieczeństwa ...*, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁴ B. Hołyst, *Wiktymologia*, Warsaw 1997, p. 72-73.

²⁵ R. Kuźniar, *Niebezpieczeństwa nowego paradygmatu bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe czasu przemian: zagrożenia – koncepcje – instytucje*, under the academic editing of R. Kuźniar, Z. Lachowski, Warsaw 2003, p. 211.

²⁶ Quoted from P. Cornish, *Threats to International Security In the 21st Century*. Chatham House. Independent Thinking on International Affairs, P. Piasecka, *Zagrożenia ładu i bezpie-*

- pandemics threat, especially most dangerous illnesses becoming prone to antibiotics,
- climate changes,
- government and state fail to lead to establishment of fallen states which become threat for security and stabilisation in the whole region.
- Another, related to purposeful human activity are as follows:
- terrorists and radicals who come from residents society and state citizens,
- threat related to borders uncertainty and porosity, and in the case of new technology and financial crime lack of the influence of borders existence,
- organised crime, financial crime, smuggling of narcotics and weapons, trafficking of human beings and connections with terrorism²⁷.

There are also attempts of detailed retrospective and prospective identification and classification of threat in international organisations studies. In the documents of the United Nations Organisation six groups of threat are mentioned, dangerous and fear-some for mankind and the world nowadays and in the nearest decade. These are:

- economic and social threats related to poverty, infectious illnesses and natural environment degradation,
- conflicts between states,
- inner conflicts with civil war, genocide and other crimes on a large scale,
- nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons,
- terrorism,
- international organised crime²⁸.

Objective and subjective criteria will be important for a basic division.

From the objective point of view as the main threats of security which follow each other should be mentioned:

- military,
- economic,

czeństwa międzynarodowego we współczesnym świecie, [in:] *Transsektorowe obszary bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, under the academic editing of K. Liedel, Warsaw 2011, p. 32-33.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 3.

²⁸ See: B. Fassbender, *Reforma ONZ i bezpieczeństwo zbiorowe*, Raport Panelu ONZ wysokiego szczebla ds. zagrożeń, wyzwań i zmiany z grudnia 2004 oraz zalecenia Sekretarza Generalnego ONZ March 2005, „Global Issue Papers”, no 17, p.11.

- political
- social,
- ecological,
- cultural,
- technological.

The list mentioned above is not complete. It only proves the broad character and complexity of present threats.

The compliment of objective division are subjective criteria. In this scope traditional division of threats should also be mentioned:

- threat of international security,
- threat of national security,
- threat of individual security.

The introduced classification should be complimented by another one, often used in the scientific discourse. According to K. Żukrowska present threats should be divided into five basic groups:

- external invasion conducted by neighbouring country or country not bordering the territory of the attacked one,
- inner disasters (epidemics, economic crisis, social tensions),
- threats of terrorist type,
- ecological threats,
- globalisation of negative character events such as: epidemics, mass natural threats, spread of economic crisis²⁹.

The authors of the work under academic editing by A. Z. Kamiński divide threats into political – military character and non-military ones including in the last group:

- mass migration,
- radical ideology and terrorism,
- spread of nuclear weapons,
- organised crime,
- ecological disasters,
- epidemics.

²⁹ M. Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo państwa w późno westfalskim środowisku międzynarodowym*, Warsaw 2003, p. 24.

S. Koziej mentions three scopes of phenomena which shape the environment of security, significant threats and sources of crisis that have to be taken into consideration by present states. These are as follows:

- globalisation and break down of bipolar world,
- rapid eruption of international terrorism,
- uncontrolled spread of mass reduction weapons³⁰.

In the discussion mentioned above it is important to pay attention to the fact that threats for human beings change in appearing international order and force the need of adaptation to changing functional necessities, which is the key element of the functioning post-cold-war security system. Globalisation and changes, which define present order focus on the function not on the structure of system – that is different from classical theory of systems – thus, particular functions can be fulfilled by separate elements of structure. However, taking into consideration the possibilities of having the effect on the system, the division into the state and non-state actors still seems to be justifiable³¹. Such approach is presented in chart 1.

Chart 1. Threats for security – functional approach

Threat	Type of threat	Threat Addressee	Type of influence	Level of analysis
Weapon trade, creation of private armies, lost of control over the armaments process, threat of aggressive war	military	state/individual	state ↔ non-state actor state ↔ state	global and regional
Manipulation on the financial market, uncontrolled cash flow	economic	state/individual	state ↔ non-state actor	global

³⁰ See: S. Koziej, *Między piekłem a rajem: szare bezpieczeństwo na progu XXI wieku*, Toruń 2006, p. 26-44.

³¹ See: P. Frankowski, *Bezpieczeństwo globalne w warunkach transformacji ładu międzynarodowego*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie*, under the academic editing of R. Zięba, Warsaw 2008, p. 238.

Threat	Type of threat	Threat Addressee	Type of influence	Level of analysis
Threats for sovereignty, state penetration	political	state/individual	state →state non-state actor ↔state	regional
International organised crime and international terrorism	social	individual/state	non-state actor →state/individual	global and regional
Degradation of environment	ecological	individual/state	non-state actor →state state ↔state	global and regional
International migration, growing old societies, epidemics, pandemics and poverty	social	state/individual	non-state actor →state	regional
Cyber-terrorism, limited access to global information, addiction to technology	Technological	individual/state	non-state actor →individual/ state	global

Source: P. Frankowski, *Bezpieczeństwo globalne w warunkach transformacji ładu* ..., op. cit., p. 239.

Presented analysis of threat allows to claim, that it influences the creation of proper security. From the subjective point of view we can talk about international state security and individual security. The objective criteria include the existence of political, military, economic, ecological, social, cultural, informative and many other types of security. However, from the spatial point of view there is global, regional, sub-regional and local security.

Conclusion

Nowadays threat is a multidimensional problem which has got a new quality because of present conditions of system. As sources and types of threat varied – apart from the old and known there are constantly appearing new

ones, resulting from the progress of human activity on many fields. Thus, the attention should be paid to the activities preparing protection from threat and such a shape of environment which minimises and moves away possibilities of its appearing. Recognition of the essence of threat allows to build adequate security.

Językowo dostateczny