



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF ARMED TERRORIST CONFLICT

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Much has been discussed about extremism and terrorism and the conflicts that arise consequently; most of the discussions address religious beliefs, ethnic interests, or national and ethnic values that are in disharmony with the principles of minorities in one community. This article unpacks fundamentalist political actions related to human and environmental values. The discussion draws on the definition of environmental terrorism posited by Michel Frederick: “deliberate and organized systematic environmental sabotage to achieve political ends.” This can include actions taken towards environmental resources.

TERRORISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Terrorism is divided into three parts: terrorism in support of national liberation or ethnic secession, left-wing terrorism and Islamic terrorism. This division is consistent with the recent political attacks and religious conflicts in Western countries, such as the attacks of 9/11 in New York of 2001, July 7, 2005 in London, and November 13, 2015 in Paris. However, it does not fit the context of defending central environmental values. Nevertheless, the United States of America considers environmental terrorism as one of the types of terrorism and enacts federal laws to confront any violent action that targets environmental facilities or institutions.

Since the stated goal of terrorism is to undermine the functional safety of the state and the well-being of the population, it is necessary to classify its actions within the scope of threats to environmental security. According to Rousseau’s social contract theory, human beings have voluntarily become organized into a political system to enhance their security, later known as statehood, and security issues were essential to their survival and protection internally from rebellion and externally from aggression. This is the national security that has been confirmed with the passage of time by the control of the state subject to violence over its territory, and by the military dominance of the international arena. Then the non-military domains of security increased in state politics.

Consequently, this led in 1980s to the redefinition of the concept of national security; its requirements were expanded in terms of the departure from the narrow traditional approach to include any act that affects the well-being of the population or the functional safety of the state in the national security threats. The concept of environmental security then appeared and became inevitable.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS AND DISASTERS

In the past decades, interest in the close relationship between man and nature has increased, and this has been linked to achieving security; the survival of societies has become associated with the control of nuclear weapons and the sound environment management in the biosphere. Some publications have warned of the depletion of natural and energy resources needed to run our societies, including “The Silent Spring” and “Limits to Growth.”

The transboundary nature of some risks, such as acid rain associated with industrial pollution, highlighted the need for consultations between countries in the search for sustainable solutions, bringing about new global phenomena, such as global warming, climate change, fragility of the ozone layer, depletion of genetic heritage, desertification, deforestation, marine pollution, radioactive, industrial and household wastes and land degradation, which are all a real threat to humans and their institutions. These escalating environmental threats were documented in the Brundtland Report in 1987 and in the Rio preparatory work in 1992.

The impact of armed conflict on environment is the most permanent, with dangerous and long-term consequences for ecosystems and the lives of people. A hundred years following World War I, farmers in northeastern France were sometimes forced to stop working because a shell was found buried in the ground. Kuwait has also been severely affected by environmental disasters resulting from the burning of hundreds of oil wells back in the 1991 Gulf War. The 9/11 Attacks resulted in huge civilian and material losses, and after a few weeks, triggered by bioterrorism. The deadly anthrax contaminated the mail and caused several deaths. It was possible for the tragedy to end there, but the matter went beyond pollution to environment, as the explosions and the fall of the towers into the atmosphere released various materials of organic and metallic elements and fine particles, and materials resulting from combustion and asbestos, in addition to toxic gases. Such materials are notoriously harmful to the health of the residents, especially those working in places close to the site of the accident.

SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The research examined the results of the degradation of ecosystems and the depletion of natural resources. By examining the empirical reality of the term 'environmental security,' two trends emerge: the first one is concerned with environment, and the second one is associated with statehood. In the first direction, environmental security of a country is the loss of non-traditional threats to the basic environmental elements and the well-being of the population; environment is an indispensable variable. The term environmental safety includes three elements: permanent exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources, protection of air, water and soil elements so that pollution does not affect the natural regeneration, and reduction of risks associated with industrial activities.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, the scope of the concept of environmental security includes all the issues associated with the protection of these three elements. This security may be endangered and threatened by acts of sabotage, such as belligerency, environmental terrorism, excessive pollution, or unsustainable exploitation of resources, let alone permanent human intervention in some environmental areas. This concept of environmental security consists of a holistic view of the relations between states because it is related to the security of the earth entirely. Therefore, this vision pays more attention to research studies addressing the impact of global environmental issues, such as the greenhouse effect, the degradation of the ozone layer and the depletion of the genetic balance. Treatment approaches for these trends should be further explored, and a combination of political, economic, technical and ethical endeavors to pave the way for global environmental security should equally be seriously considered.

Some research studies address environmental security in a different approach; environment is considered an independent variable, while state security is a dependent variable, and environmental safety is an environmental component of national security. These studies are based on the assumption that environmental issues due to their origin or severity may affect national security to varying degrees according to the social, economic, political or diplomatic difficulties and disturbances they lead to or attacks on regional safety or open warfare.

The relationship between national security and its associated environmental component thus is examined according to two visions: the first vision discusses environmental issues as the main factor in the loss of security, and this trend is based

on either the clashes resulting from local or regional environmental conflicts such as cross-border pollution and the overexploitation of common resources, or the shift and disruption of power relations in one region or different regions as a result of major environmental disturbances such as climate change and desertification. The second vision addresses environmental issues as secondary factors to the loss of security; environmental disputes affect national security only indirectly, thus contributing to the increase in political, economic, social or military turmoil, hence fueling existing conflicts.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

International environmental management is related to achieving the concept of sustainable development; that is, it is related to societal issues pertinent to environmental problems. Therefore, it is a holistic concept that applies at various levels for different purposes, in an environment marked by conflict of interest. Looking at environmental constraints seems to be the area preferred for trials to update public action which is reflected in the emergence of new patterns of environmental regulation and protection. However, every year millions of tons of waste and pollutants are dumped into the sea, and such a practice is subject to several international or regional strict rules to combat marine pollution. The international community recognized years ago that preserving a good environment is a major international issue, but the issue itself did not put into action a real environmental law.

To well address this inability in the international system and the ineffectiveness of international systems to protect environment, the international community has been working since 2001 to lay down the outlines for a reform that is still vague. Since Johannesburg Summit of 2002, this impasse should incentivize considering different methods that go beyond the old ones, which were considered a model work, which are in fact shackles, so to speak, that prevent reaching the definition of the common environmental interest. Thus, this common vision should allow us to move towards intergenerational solidarity that imparts meaning to the concept of sustainable development, as formulated at the global level by the Brundtland Commission in 1987: "We borrow environmental capital for the sake of future generations, knowing that we can never pay them their dues, yet humankind has the necessary means to ensure sustainable development, that is, to meet and accommodate the needs of current generations, without compromising the ability of future generations to respond to their own needs."

The fragility of international arrangements and the contributions of international organizations to environmental management are equally important in rigorous discussions, as the process of consultation and decision-making on the environment at the international level is still a process marred by poor organization. Despite the clear links between environment, economy and development, international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, have not equally provided sufficient resources to respond effectively and regularly to global environmental problems. As the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Development Program seek to enhance their impact, the fact that they are only programs is holding them back. The program has very limited room to maneuver and make progress, because it does not exercise any powers other than making recommendations. Despite the initiatives of UNEP are different, it cannot go beyond its scope, unless otherwise it is granted real authority to intervene and act.

Despite the objection of some countries, the program was granted the right to develop independent capabilities in scientific research; there is consensus that this body should become the scientific authority in this field and the main source of information on the global environment. The fragility of international environmental governance has eroded and whittled away at confidence in the international system, which has led various countries to reconsider their own environmental interests.

TERRORISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

In recent years, initiatives to develop the green economy have come into play in various parts of the world; some bodies that have taken into account the threats to the environment and the position of people in their environment. Following the 9/11 Attacks, awareness of other threat sources doubled, especially the terrorist threat to nuclear power stations, and the West began to feel increasingly uneasy and worried about the vulnerability of the infrastructure.

The threat of mass terrorism is no longer illusionary. In Belgium, investigations proved in 2016 that many sites were subject to the terrorists' meticulous scrutiny, whether in collusion with the inside with four security permits that may have been withdrawn from the Tihange Nuclear Power Station, through the penetration of subcontracting companies on which this industry relies heavily, or by an old accident that remains unknown, relating to the serious sabotage of a turbine at the Doyle Power Plant in August 2014.

If we add to these widespread breakthroughs the risk of piracy of nuclear waste during its transportation or storage, we then find out that giving up nuclear energy will greatly reduce the risk of terrorism, while freeing up new capital to exploit renewable energy sources, as the cost of rehabilitating nuclear facilities in France is estimated at one hundred billion euros. The advantage of renewable energy is that it is decentralized and thus operates in small networks, making them uneasy or undangerous materials in terrorist operations.

Given the fact that terrorism is ballooning and snowballing into a bigger threat, it is important to include other areas of environmental transformation, as more attacks were recently launched. Some of the projects that many people today disapprove in Europe are considered direct and important targets of terrorism, in addition to the waste of public money and agricultural land, coupled with the emission of greenhouse gases, in clear contradiction to the Paris Agreement.

The local movements and communities should pay attention to economy, and negotiate with their countries to strengthen public. It is necessary to act immediately to accelerate the environmental transformation of economy and make it at the service of society.

CONCLUSION

Environmental issues are potential threats, as environmental pressures and scarcity of resources will be the source of future instability of states, and a cause of international conflicts. Thus, it appears that the concept of environmental safety has a very wide scope in the context of the two trends that have been discussed and analyzed: the first trend uses the concept of environmental security to breathe new life into international relations, drawing on competition and conflict between states to obtain strategic natural resources. The other trend depends on environmental degradation, which harms the functional safety of states and the welfare of people.

This analysis deserves more attention for its deep psychological and real impact even though it is apparently marked weaknesses coupled with the challenges it has encountered, which are manifested in the practical aspect of the concept of environmental safety and security. Environmental changes may contribute to an increase in conflicts and unrest, and hence create a feeling of insecurity; consequently, they may be used as a tool for internal or external policy. The big gap between existing environmental security and sustainable development should be seamlessly bridged,

and rational policy requires structural changes and a set of innovations that clearly go beyond the opportunistic patching that seek to paper over and shore up a whole host of issues.