

Assessing modern challenges and threats affecting national security by full-scale military operations

Evaluación de los desafíos y amenazas modernas que afectan la seguridad nacional mediante operaciones militares a gran escala

Avaliando desafios e ameaças modernas que afetam a segurança nacional por operações militares em larga escala

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Abstract

The concept of state security is widely recognized as a fundamental pillar in safeguarding a nation's security environment, particularly against both external and internal threats. These threats, whether acting individually or collectively, complicate the functioning of state institutions, civil society, and other critical sectors. A persistent challenge in this domain is the deliberate creation of an artificially manipulated information environment, which significantly shapes public consciousness and fosters sentiments hostile to the state and its core attributes. This phenomenon manifests through the spread of misleading narratives, various forms of illegal activity, and psychological destabilization. Beyond their societal impact, such threats pose a direct risk to the state's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence. They also undermine the democratic decision-making process, weaken national defense capabilities, and hinder the population's ability to actively participate in national resistance efforts. Among the specific challenges to state security, the protection of critical infrastructure is particularly vital, with energy infrastructure emerging as a primary target of enemy attacks in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Additionally, cyberspace remains highly vulnerable, underscoring the urgent need for a comprehensive real-time cybersecurity analytics system to safeguard critical infrastructure. Furthermore, advancing scientific research in the defense sector is essential. Interdisciplinary studies focused on security-related innovations play a crucial role in enhancing national defense strategies. Such research should analyze the experiences of Ukraine's security and defense forces in adapting to modern combat methods, including the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles and other advanced technologies.

Keywords: State security, challenges, threats, martial law, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, combat readiness, information and analytical systems, aggression.

Resumen

La noción de seguridad del Estado se considera ampliamente como un aspecto fundamental para salvaguardar el entorno de seguridad de una nación, en particular contra amenazas tanto externas como internas. Estas amenazas, ya sea de forma individual o colectiva, complican el funcionamiento de las instituciones estatales, la sociedad civil y otros sectores clave. Un desafío persistente es la creación deliberada de un entorno de información manipulado artificialmente dentro de la sociedad, que influye significativamente en la conciencia pública y fomenta sentimientos hostiles al Estado y sus atributos fundamentales. Esto puede manifestarse en la difusión de narrativas engañosas, diversas formas de comportamiento ilegal y desestabilización psicológica. Más allá de su impacto social, estas amenazas plantean un riesgo tangible para la integridad territorial, la soberanía y la independencia del Estado. También ponen en peligro el proceso democrático de toma de decisiones, debilitan las capacidades de defensa nacional y obstaculizan la capacidad de la población para participar de manera significativa en los esfuerzos de resistencia nacional. Entre los desafíos específicos para la seguridad del Estado, la protección de la infraestructura crítica es particularmente crucial, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que la infraestructura energética se ha convertido en un objetivo principal de los ataques enemigos en el contexto de la guerra ruso-ucraniana. Además, el ciberespacio sigue siendo muy vulnerable, lo que subraya la necesidad de establecer un sistema integral de análisis de ciberseguridad en tiempo real para proteger la infraestructura crítica. Además, el desarrollo de la investigación científica en el sector de la defensa es vital. La realización de nuevos estudios interdisciplinarios centrados en las innovaciones relacionadas con la seguridad es esencial para mejorar las estrategias nacionales de defensa. Esas investigaciones deberían tener como objetivo analizar las experiencias de las fuerzas de seguridad y defensa de Ucrania en la adaptación a los métodos de combate modernos, incluido el uso de vehículos aéreos no tripulados y otras tecnologías avanzadas.

Palabras clave: Seguridad del Estado, desafíos, amenazas, ley marcial, ciberseguridad, infraestructura crítica, preparación para el combate, sistemas de información y análisis, agresión.

Resumo

A noção de segurança do estado é amplamente considerada como um aspecto fundamental da salvaguarda do ambiente de segurança de uma nação, particularmente contra ameaças externas e internas. Essas ameaças, sejam individuais ou coletivas, complicam o funcionamento das instituições estatais, da sociedade civil e de outros setores-chave. Um desafio persistente é a criação deliberada de um ambiente de informação artificialmente manipulado dentro da sociedade, que influencia significativamente a consciência pública e fomenta sentimentos hostis ao estado e seus principais atributos. Isso pode se manifestar na disseminação de narrativas enganosas, várias formas de comportamento ilegal e desestabilização psicológica. Além de seu impacto social, tais ameaças representam um risco tangível à integridade territorial, soberania e independência do estado. Elas também colocam em risco o processo democrático de tomada de decisão, enfraquecem as capacidades de defesa nacional e dificultam a capacidade da população de se envolver significativamente em esforços de resistência nacional. Entre os desafios específicos para a segurança do estado, a proteção da infraestrutura crítica é particularmente crucial, especialmente considerando que a infraestrutura de energia se tornou um alvo primário de ataques inimigos no contexto da guerra russo-ucraniana. Além disso, o ciberespaço continua altamente vulnerável, ressaltando a necessidade de estabelecer um sistema abrangente para análises de segurança cibernética em tempo real para proteger a infraestrutura crítica. Além disso, o desenvolvimento de pesquisa científica no setor de defesa é vital. A realização de novos estudos interdisciplinares com foco em inovações relacionadas à segurança é essencial para aprimorar as estratégias nacionais de defesa. Essa pesquisa deve ter como objetivo analisar as experiências das forças de segurança e defesa da Ucrânia na adaptação a métodos de combate modernos, incluindo o uso de veículos aéreos não tripulados e outras tecnologias avançadas.

Palavras-chave: Segurança do estado, desafios, ameaças, lei marcial, segurança cibernética, infraestrutura crítica, prontidão para combate, sistemas de informação e análise, agressão.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring state security is an extremely difficult task, especially in the context of full-scale military operations. The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine has left our country with several extraordinary challenges both in the area of fulfilling positive obligations to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms (to life, personal integrity, property, education, etc.) of our citizens, and in the area of preserving statehood as such (Orlov & Pribytkova, 2022). Typically, war has significant negative and long-term consequences for millions of people around the world, which can be direct (death of people, destroyed infrastructure, burden on the healthcare system) and indirect (complications in the educational process, toxic effects of violence, etc.) (Teremetskyi & Kolodchyna, 2022).

The secure existence and development of the state can be limited or disrupted at any time, as evidenced by the Russian armed invasion in February-March 2014, followed by full-scale military aggression and invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Since then, we have understood that the fight against negative factors that destabilize

national security can be generally described as defense, which is carried out in all spheres of the state's functioning. As a result of such a situation, state security should be considered as a complex phenomenon that affects political, military, economic, environmental and other spheres. The absence of a threat is an important, but not unique aspect of ensuring security. An equally important factor is public awareness of the state's capabilities to provide it (Wisniewski, 2011) In this context, security serves as a fundamental prerequisite for the functioning of a state or organization. It is reflected in the establishment of diplomatic relations, the formation of political parties, the creation of international organizations, the signing of intergovernmental agreements, the adoption of laws, and the development of effective strategies and mechanisms to counter emerging threats. Security forms the foundation of both international relations and domestic agreements. When a country establishes relations with another state, security considerations are always a top priority, as ensuring stability and protection is essential for fostering cooperation and mutual trust (Rikhsibayev, 2023). At the same time, in the modern globalized world, we should be aware that today no state can independently solve its security problems and guarantee its own territorial integrity and sovereignty without the support of the international community. Even potential "superpowers" cannot prevent and counteract terrorism, extremism, radicalism, nuclear threats and other global challenges. When it comes to less powerful states, international protection sometimes becomes almost the only guarantee of preserving national security (Kobko, 2022).

Modern Ukrainian science plays a crucial role in supporting the country's security and defense forces by providing innovative ideas and practical solutions to urgent challenges in managing command structures and military units directly engaged in combat and deterring the aggressor. Over the years, leading Ukrainian researchers have extensively explored various aspects of state security, addressing a broad spectrum of issues through their scholarly work. However, the challenges facing Ukraine's state security amid the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation are unprecedented in the global context. As a result, these challenges require a comprehensive understanding that is inseparably linked to other contemporary threats and security concerns.

The purpose of the article is to identify current challenges and threats to the State security. To achieve this purpose, it is necessary to solve the following tasks: to formulate the author's definition of state security; to identify the main challenges and threats to state security based on the analysis of works by domestic and foreign scholars, many global problems of humanity and peculiarities of life of Ukrainian society under martial law.

METHODOLOGY

During the study, a complex of general and special methods of scientific knowledge was used, which allowed us to consider the researched issues through the prism of the most relevant aspects in the conditions of martial law. Based on the use of the logical-semantic method, the following was revealed:

- a) the essence of fundamental challenges and threats to state security (in particular, in the field of ensuring the security of critical infrastructure and enterprises);
- b) the essence and peculiarities of the impact of threats associated with the improvement of individual procedures for the implementation, implementation of professional activities of defense policy subjects and control over them, considering the challenges of the onset of new global pandemics.

The method of documentary analysis, along with the formal-legal method, enabled the formation of a comprehensive understanding of the most destructive challenges to state security as outlined in regulatory legal acts. These challenges are specifically defined in the *Strategy for Ensuring State Security*, approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on February 16, 2022 (No. 56/2022).

The comparative legal method facilitated the analysis of foreign experiences in addressing challenges posed by emerging global pandemics. Additionally, through modeling and forecasting methods, promising directions for further scientific research were identified, particularly in relation to responding to modern security threats arising from full-scale military operations. It is crucial to recognize that beyond the methodological approaches mentioned, assessing the impact of such threats on state security remains imperative. The principle here is that, regardless of the legal foundation upon which state security is built, any failure to maintain it can lead to profound and unpredictable consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From a psychological perspective, some domestic researchers emphasize that the essence of security lies in protecting society, individuals, and the state from dangers and threats. This protection ensures the existence and preservation of favorable living conditions for the future, which are essential for optimal functioning and development. The complexity and internal contradictions in defining the concept of security

are evident in the diverse range of definitions and approaches. In general, these perspectives shape the understanding of security as a human experience—a sense of protection from various dangers. The selection of specific aspects of human security and the lens through which they are analyzed depends on the system to which an individual belongs. These systems include *man-nature*, *man-production*, *man-technology*, as well as social systems such as *man-human*, *man-society*, and *man-state*. Scientists identify three key factors that determine human security: the human actor, environmental factors, and security factors. These factors encompass both physical and psychological means of protection against dangerous situations (Lazorko et al., 2022).

Ziuzia (2023) focuses on the conceptual uncertainty of the critical issue of what should be the most optimal public-management model of ensuring the state security of Ukraine in the current realities of the development of the strategic security environment. The researcher identifies the characteristic features of the State security system of Ukraine: the system should be manageable, observable, and identifiable; the system may contain destabilizing elements of subsystems; it is necessary to distinguish security levels according to the principle of their relative independence (“strategic-tactical-operational” or, for example, “national-district-regional-local” or “functional-sectoral”).

Mitzen (2006) establishes, in addition to physical security, States also seek ontological security, or security of the self. Ontological security is achieved through the routinization of relationships with significant actors, leading states to become attached to these interactions. Like its physical counterpart, the pursuit of ontological security is a constant. However, states may adhere to routines either rigidly or reflexively, and variations in attachment styles influence their security strategies. Realists argue that states aim to avoid security dilemmas, but uncertainty often prevents them from doing so. Since even an insecure routine can provide a sense of ontological security, states seeking rational security may paradoxically become attached to conflict.

This ontological pursuit of security offers new insights into seemingly irrational conflicts and provides a framework for analyzing the stability of various outcomes in world politics. At the same time, the authors of this article assert that understanding the essence of state security is inseparable from its strategic vision. In modern contexts, the security strategies of each state or entity consist of three key strategic actions; these include: a) stabilization efforts (maintaining and promoting security); b) crisis response, often referred to as crisis management; and c) active defense (military) efforts. The biggest security-related challenge is the prevention of threats. This is achieved through stabilization efforts, which are aimed at maintaining and

promoting stability in the security environment. These efforts primarily consist of a) monitoring the security components, forecasting their development, engaging in neutralizing or eliminating sources of potential threats; b) actively promoting stability and strengthening positive development trends in the security environment; c) maintaining and improving the security system with efforts that should be sufficient to overcome emerging challenges; d) stabilization efforts in a broad sense, carried out with a preventive purpose and may also include deterrence, which is now defined more broadly than during the Cold War, when it referred to mutual assured destruction (Piwowarski, 2019).

Today, there are a significant number of challenges and threats in the field of state security. According to the State Security Strategy, some of the most destructive challenges are envisaged, in particular, “the Russian Federation continues to wage a hybrid war, systematically uses political, economic, information-psychological and other means, as well as cyber-attacks to achieve its strategic goals in Ukraine, including compromising its statehood. The occupation administration of the Russian Federation, which is created by its state bodies and structures functionally responsible for the management of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and self-proclaimed bodies controlled by the Russian Federation that have usurped the exercise of power in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, grossly violate the principles and norms of international law and human and civil liberties, and their activities threaten the state security of Ukraine. Destructive propaganda both from outside and inside Ukraine, using social contradictions, incites hatred, provokes conflicts and undermines social unity. The special services of some foreign countries continue their intelligence and subversive activities against Ukraine, trying to fuel separatist sentiments, use organized criminal groups and corrupt officials to strengthen the infrastructure of influence. The attempts of subjects of intelligence and subversive activities to gain access to information constituting state secrets and proprietary information, as well as other restricted information, the protection of which is required by law, including advanced technologies and developments in the defense industry, economic, scientific and technical spheres, are well established” (Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 56/2022) and other challenges.

One of the fundamental challenges and threats to national security considering the constant hostile attacks on energy facilities is the security of critical infrastructure. In this study, it is worth paying attention to an aspect that is not as often covered by domestic and foreign media compared to physical security and protection from missile attacks, such as cybersecurity.

Today, it is important to note that the security of critical infrastructure and enterprises consists of two factors: cybersecurity and physical security. It is important to emphasize that these factors cannot be considered separately and that an integrated cyber-physical approach is required (Choras et al., 2016). Critical infrastructures are vital assets for public safety, economic well-being, and national security. Cyber systems are widely used to monitor and control critical infrastructure. Many infrastructures are connected to the Internet through corporate networks. Thus, cybersecurity is an important item on the national security agenda (Karabacak, Yildirim & Baykal, 2016). At the same time, some scholars believe that online exchange of information on cybersecurity should be aimed at ensuring the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure, which is necessary to effectively counter cyberattacks. The researchers present an online cybersecurity analytics system for detecting and mitigating cyberattacks and exchanging information between critical infrastructure operators and regional and national authorities, as well as international authorities. The system consists of one part that acts as a Security Center at the critical infrastructure level, with the ability to automatically mitigate attacks, and a part at the metacritical infrastructure level that collects and analyzes cybersecurity data on a Pan-European scale (McKeever et al., 2020).

Brusakova and Getmanets (2021) in the context of cybersecurity emphasize the need to create “a mechanism for obtaining data on cyberattacks and a corresponding closed register in order to more effectively counter such cyberattacks and collect information on cyberattacks for further analysis by competent state authorities” (p. 82). In the context of the above, when analyzing the challenges and threats to state security, it should be noted that cybersecurity is becoming an urgent problem for those areas that have not traditionally been associated with information and communication technologies. This problem is increasingly approaching the field of road transport. As Salmanova and Komziuk (2021) note, “the operation of cars and other vehicles is becoming more and more intensive every year, which is primarily a testament to technological progress. At the same time, the increase in the number of these vehicles creates many problems both for the organization and maintenance of road safety and for the life of settlements” (pp. 150-151).

The Japanese researcher Hirofumi Onishi (2014) points out that vehicle cybersecurity, which has recently become a public concern, has more complex vulnerabilities than conventional computer and Internet cybersecurity. In addition, it is believed that the more frequent connection between the vehicle and the smartphone with a limited security mechanism increases security risks. According to the authors of this article, this problem, despite its revolutionary nature and remoteness from modern

Ukrainian society, may pose risks to public safety and order, as well as the life and health of citizens, and the protection of the interests of the state in the coming years. State security under martial law is inextricably linked to the defense sector, which creates a number of challenges and threats related to improving certain procedures for implementing, implementing professional activities of defense policy subjects and controlling them, as well as effective administrative and legal support for their daily life while performing official duties, changing the relevant legislation to improve the quality of effective activities of domestic defense structures, and improving the system of motivational and incentive tools that can be used to protect the Ukrainian border and domestic administrative and territorial units (Rusetskyi et al., 2020).

In the defense sector, maintaining high combat readiness of personnel is of particular importance, i.e., “the ability of a soldier or formation (unit) to begin performing combat tasks in accordance with their assignment within a given time frame. Performing service and combat tasks in combating crime involves a set of basic measures, which include professional selection; training and advanced training; material and technical support; education of moral and volitional qualities, self-improvement; preparation, planning of events and command; organization of service using special methods” (Vlasenko, Shevchenko, 2022, p. 117). At the same time, a set of “targeted actions to identify threats to the existing legal order, prevent and stop crimes, restore legal order, and bring to legal liability” is aimed at ensuring combat readiness of personnel (Didenko, Salmanova, 2022, p. 61).

In the context of defense challenges, special attention should be paid to science and technology issues. This is because modern society is characterized by the constant development of technologies, the digitalization of all new spheres of society, the complication of the process of communication between the state and the public in the conditions of hostile information and psychological operations. All this in its entirety requires the development of scientific potential in the domestic defense sector. At the same time, with the rapid improvement of national defense science and technology, it is urgent to build a system of indicators of national defense science and technology and make management more scientific. The system of indicators can contribute to the strategic management of national defense science and technology: from experience management to scientific management, as well as improve the level of efficiency of management decisions (Shen, 2017). Therefore, it is not for nothing that Gusmiarti (2023) draws attention to the fact that society cannot function properly without the support of scientific developments and defense applications within the state. Even sometimes, defense science is called a cultural product. The relations of defense science are diverse, for example, its connection with religion and faith, morality, influence

on cultural development, human health and leadership. In addition, defense science is designated as a cluster of social sciences that are closely related to economic, psychological and other social sciences. Defense science has a close connection with the sphere of state security, public safety and order, which belong to the sphere of responsibility of the police and law enforcement agencies in accordance with current laws, to stop anarchism if it grows to a dangerous level for society, political stability and security of the state.

It is important to highlight that scientific research in the field of security and defense also focuses on identifying promising avenues for the implementation of advanced technologies that enhance responses to emerging security challenges. For instance, the SOTA information and analytical system is employed for continuous monitoring and assessment of Ukraine's national security. Based on its analyses, a curated set of information and analytical reports is submitted daily to the President of Ukraine. Additionally, the Main Department of the National Police in the Kharkiv region actively utilizes the SORC system, which enables rapid access to critical information during war crime investigations. This system facilitates the processing and uploading of documents, photographs, videos, and other materials related to war criminals, including members of the Russian army (Bolvinov, 2024, p. 540).

In the context of challenges and threats to state security, environmental security plays an important role in the light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the global vector for environmental protection. An important omission of several countries is the lack of a single agreed list of indicators for assessing environmental security in each country. This is important, given the obligation of each state to take measures to protect the environment that exclude the possibility of causing damage to the environment of other states. Accordingly, the availability of the same indicators for all states will allow other stakeholders to monitor the state of the environment in the state, as well as ensure real state responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of the environment (Bezpalova, 2024). It is also important that the state, international partners and the public pay due attention to the problem of a strategic vision of biosafety in the context of considering the challenges of martial law, in particular the consequences of Kakhovka hydroelectric dam blowing up, which may manifest themselves over the coming years and decades.

In the context of state security, it is also essential to consider the challenges posed by emerging global pandemics. The unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences have presented significant challenges to local governments, from responding to an unknown crisis to ensuring public safety in conditions of extreme uncertainty. Civil protection and preparedness for natural, man-made,

and other disasters are fundamental components of any local community (Prebilic & Kukovic, 2021).

In this regard, some domestic scholars rightly emphasize that the COVID-19 outbreak is a global public health crisis. Within three and a half months, the pandemic spread to nearly every continent, affecting 80% of the world's countries. It served as a test of humanity's ability to withstand common existential threats, address time-sensitive issues in an organized manner, and draw appropriate conclusions.

During the initial months, uncertainty prevailed in nearly all aspects, including modes of transmission, the virus's origin and environmental persistence, diagnostic methods, therapeutic approaches, high-risk populations, lethality, and containment policies. This challenge is further compounded by advancements in biotechnology and biochemistry over the past century, which have facilitated the development and production of biological weapons. Genetic engineering poses a significant potential risk. The ease of production and widespread availability of biological agents and technical expertise have contributed to the continued proliferation of biological weapons.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic extends beyond a direct attack on government or military targets; it constitutes an assault on public health, global stability, and the economy. The emergence of new, potentially more sophisticated forms of terrorist activity involving biological weapons necessitates a reassessment of global approaches to peace and security (Teremetskyi et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

State security in modern conditions is an extremely complex and multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing a wide range of challenges and threats. The redefinition of state security has been significantly shaped by the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has emphasized the need for both cybersecurity and the physical protection of critical infrastructure. Key priorities now include maintaining high combat readiness among Ukraine's security and defense forces, advancing defense research particularly interdisciplinary studies that integrate humanitarian and technical knowledge in modern information systems and developing an effective public administration framework to address global pandemics at regulatory, institutional, organizational, and managerial levels.

Looking ahead, promising areas for further scientific research on state security responses to modern threats particularly those arising from full-scale military operations include a comprehensive examination of corruption in mobilization training and defense procurement, strategies for upholding integrity and professionalism among

security and defense personnel under martial law, and the development of methodological recommendations to enhance cooperation among central executive bodies, higher education institutions, and research organizations.

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