

SOME MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF AN OVERLOOKED RESOURCE – ENVIRONMENT – AS CONCERN FOR EUROPE’S SECURITY

MAFTEI LUCIAN

Logistic Directorate/General Staff

Abstract

As part of the concept of defense resource management, the management of material resources is related in many ways with the result of the management of challenges that the environment brings everyday in recent years.

The environment decisively influences the areas where military action is conducted and is considered both by theorists and commanders when a decision is sought. It is estimated that the link between environment and issues that can cause mutations in terms of security in the region should be studied to identify threats, risks and possible ways to counter them.

The global crisis and some new and re-emerging threats and challenges spiraling out of control, which coupled with escalating violence and poverty, threaten to cripple entire communities and countries, represent the beginning of the 21st century. To tackle this crisis, it is currently essential that the international democratic community works to access and harness as many resources and partners as possible. One of the given resources often overlooked and underestimated, is the **environment** in which we are leaving, working, creating, so in one word existing. Speaking about the environment subject will lead us undubtfully to another major concern of nowadays society which is **security**.

Those above mentioned subjects are emerging from and influencing each other, and therefore they are one of the major concerns of the entire world, but nevertheless of the old continent where we are living, Europe too.

The cross-border character of environmental issues has led the international community to take an active role in initiating environmental projects not only to further social and economic development, but also to promote security and stability. As a consequence, co-operation in the area of natural resources and environment protection become the most efficient tool towards the establishment of political co-operation, both in the European region and in a trans-boundary context, as well as a good basis for prevention of certain potential conflicts. Therefore, consensus is emerging that cooperative and effective management of natural resources, and national, regional, and international security, are closely linked. For this reason, OSCE has initiated a process to better integrate environment into peace building and multilateral action in the regions of South-Eastern Europe. These regions are in the midst of tectonic political and economic shifts, with substantial environmental and social consequences. Managing these transitions peacefully is a goal high on the priorities of decision makers, both in the region and internationally.

In order to have an understanding of the general concepts of environment and security a good approach is to start with some definitions and explanation of terms. Although there are a lot of definitions regarding the environment and security, we will use the Webster dictionary definitions considering this as a unanimous acceptance of these words. Using this source we will see that the environment *is the surrounding nature composed of the sum of the external factors in which flora, fauna and other things exist* (1). Security *is the fact of being protected by any danger; a filling of trust and quiet which is given to someone by the absence of any danger* (2). And finally, the collective security *is a status of the states relationships created by overtaking through treaties, some common defensive measures against an aggression* (3).

Environment concerns for Europe

The most concerned organization about the environment in Europe is the European Union (EU). EU commission's overall environmental policy is set out in the Fifth Environmental Action Program. A cornerstone of this program is achieving sustainability - meeting our generation's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. As its title "*Towards Sustainability*" implies, the program sets long-term objectives and focuses on a global approach. It is underpinned by two major principles. According to the first one, environmental dimension must be integrated into all major policy areas. It specifically targets five sectors: industry, energy, transport, agriculture and tourism. The second one stipulates that the command-and-control approach must be replaced with a sharing of responsibility between the various parties involved - governments, industry and the public.

This approach was reinforced by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which represented a breakthrough in addressing environmental issues at the European level. The Treaty enshrined sustainable development as one of the EU's tasks and strengthened the principle that environmental protection must be integrated into all European policies and activities. Realizing these goals requires a wide range of instruments, of which research and development is just one.

European legislation has been setting environmental standards across the continent since the early 1970s. Creating a Single Market in environmentally friendly products and processes and thus stimulating their emergence achieved, in large proportion, this aspect. Over 200 pieces of legislation have been formulated in various sectors, such as air and water quality, noise, waste disposal, chemicals security and the protection of nature. This legislation ranges from limits on specific pollutants, imposed during the 1970s and 1980s, to the broader strategies of the 1990s, which focus more on regulating the consumption of natural resources. Alongside the regulatory mandate, EU environmental policy is developing a wide range of activities and initiatives. These include improving environmental data - which led to the creation of the European Environmental Agency in 1994 - financial support mechanisms, information and education programs, promoting eco-labels, and economic measures aimed at incorporating the “true cost” of environmental protection into the prices of goods and services.

Sustainable development is also one of the main priorities of EU energy policy, together with reducing Europe's dependence on external supplies and integrating the Community's individual national energy markets. One of the most challenging issues in sustainable energy is the European commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as agreed at the Kyoto conference in 1997. This puts energy efficiency policy firmly at the top of the list of priorities. In addition, the EU runs a number of programs devoted to promoting renewable energy strategies, as well as ensuring the safety and security of nuclear materials in Europe [1].

The impact of environment on the SE European security

The South-Eastern Europe covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The past decade of war, conflict and transition has left the region with a legacy of inadequate growth, declining living standards and high environmental stress. The region is mainly affected by heavy industrial pollution in urban-industrial areas, intensive agriculture with yet uncalculated health impacts, a lack of water technology and infrastructure, and industrial pollution from the mining sector. Shared resources such as trans-boundary lakes and rivers as well as biodiversity (e.g. in the Carpathian Mountains) pose both a challenge and opportunity for cooperation.

The OSECE Environment and Security Initiative's (ENVSEC) consultations in Belgrade in 2002 have led to a first assessment of environment and security interactions. This was continued with regional meeting in Skopje in 2004, which confirmed priorities and suggested further work. This includes the assessment of

regional cross-border risks from mining and industry, improved management of common river basins (e.g. Danube, Tisza, Sava), and the promotion of nature conservation as a tool to encourage regional cooperation. A desk assessment of security risks from mining was discussed in a workshop in Romania in 2005. Other current or planned activities include rehabilitation of most prominent “hot spots” (e.g. a feasibility study for closing the Lojane mine in FYR Macedonia) and fostering cooperation in the Tisza and Prespa international basins, or finding innovative techniques and technologies for contaminated mine waters assessment, management and remediation.

Natural resources and environment protection

Co-operation in the area of natural resources and environment protection is one of the most efficient tools towards the establishment of political co-operation, both in the Region and in a trans-boundary context, as well as a good basis for prevention of certain potential conflicts [2].

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP) has esteemed bilateral co-operation as an important part of its work program. Protection, improvement and sustainable development of the three natural lakes and border massifs shared by the Republic of Macedonia with its neighbors are imperative for bi- and tri-lateral co-operation.

Bilateral environmental co-operation has been institutionalized with all neighboring countries - Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro. In the wider Region, bilateral co-operation has been established with Croatia, Russia, and the Czech Republic. Joint bilateral programs have been initiated with Hungary, Slovenia and Ukraine. Parties to the above agreements will perform the envisaged co-operation in the following domains such as: development and implementation of programs in the field of sustainable energy production, conservation and efficiency; exchange of information and experience concerning new technologies and renewable energy sources; exchange of information on environmental impact assessments referring to construction works and other activities, especially those performed in an area under jurisdiction of one state, that may affect an area under jurisdiction of another state; development and promotion of environmentally sound national policies in industry, energy, transport, agriculture and tourism; co-operation and undertaking of adequate measures to prevent industrial accidents that may lead to trans-boundary security effects, responding to environmental incidents caused by natural disasters; protection in the field of hazardous chemical substances posing threat to the environment; co-operation in terms of regulation and control of international trade in industrial and toxic waste, dangerous substances and secondary raw materials, as well as in endangered species of flora and fauna.

In this context, establishment of trans-boundary environmental monitoring and early warning systems is key for obtaining relevant and timely information on state of the environment for policy makers.

Detailed synthesis and analysis of data, in accordance with pre-defined criteria, should form basis for decision-making and elaboration of measures for action. The initiatives of this kind, applying regional approach to the addressing environmental “hot spots”, technically and financially supported by international institutions, deserve the support and efforts for their implementation.

Trans-boundary co-operation on natural resources management has been hindered by four main factors: different legal and regulatory frameworks in each country; the lack of effective enforcement of existing laws and regulations; different, often conflicting, environmental and natural resource management goals in each country; institutions in each country that often have very different roles and responsibilities, and different degrees of autonomy.

Environmental security fields of actions by SEE countries

Albania has adopted several environmental laws and by laws to set up a basic legislative framework for environmental protection. “Hot spots” such as, ex-chemical plants for agriculture, ex-polyvinyl chloride (PVC) factory, oil refinery, oil drilling fields and several mines all over Albania are considered very problematic for the environment and for public health and therefore for security.

Furthermore, there are three big natural resources shared with neighboring countries: Shkodra lake shared with Montenegro; Ohrid lake shared with FYR of Macedonia; Prespa lakes shared with FYR of Macedonia and Greece. There is also a site rich in biodiversity shared with Montenegro and Kosovo, for which there is an interest of establishing a Peace Park.

There are several projects for cleaning up the polluted environment, and for better management of natural resources. In this regard there are several agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between Albania and neighboring countries (Greece, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) for sustainable development and integrated ecosystem management of those natural resources.

Implementation of Lake Ohrid Conservation Project can be taken as a model for other bilateral and trilateral projects in the region.

The ENVSEC initiative was considered as very important and relevant for regional cooperation in SEE and for **Bosnia and Herzegovina** also. It contributes to institutional strengthening and capacity building. Indeed, the first successful co-operation between entities after the war 1992 – 1995 was in the field of environment.

The key ministries in charge of environmental issues in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are the Ministry of Physical Planning and Environment, and in the Republic Srpska, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology. Their current work in progress is as follows: preparation of working material for Law on Environmental Protection at State level; preparation of feasibility study for establishment of Environment Agency; creation of National Environmental Monitoring and Information System (as per European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) structure).

“Hot spots” are already defined in 2002, at the Belgrade ENVSEC Consultations, and the following “hot spots” are to be added: minefields and the natural park / protected areas of Hutovo Blato (Ramsar site) and Blidinje.

In the area of natural resources management, the successful regional co-operation was established on the following projects: project in Neretva River Delta (between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina); project on protection and sustainable management of Neretva and Trebisnjica ecosystem (between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina); the Strategic Plan for the IUCN SEE Program, May 2004, that has been proposed for consideration as basis for regional co-operation in management of trans-boundary protected areas. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party of Danube River Protection Convention.

Bulgaria has established and maintained close co-operation with SEE countries in the field of environmental protection, including management of the shared natural resources and addressing security risks posed by potentially hazardous activities.

The joint Bulgarian - Romanian air quality monitoring system for detection of dangerous emissions established under the European Union Pre-accession Instrument Financed by the European Union (EU PHARE) Program was presented and the positive results from its functioning were emphasized.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship of the OSCE particularly appreciates that environmental cooperation in SEE within the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative contributes to strengthening stability and security not only in the region and in the target countries, but also among the local communities and the civil society.

The Government of the **Republic of Croatia** has undertaken decisive steps in setting up a comprehensive legal framework for management of natural resources and risks management in protection of environment, sea, water resources, forests and agricultural activities. The key responsibility over management and monitoring of certain environmental media lies with the Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction (MEPPPC), which have the Contingency Plan on environmental protection. The State Directorate for Protection and Rescue has been set up to establish a system of protection of population, property and other assets in case of disaster.

The most relevant national policies are: the Strategy for National Security and the National Strategy for Environmental Protection and National Environment Action Plan (NEAP). Croatia ratified a number of international treaties regulating issues related to trans-boundary management and co-operation.

One of the best examples of international water management is the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin that aims at trans-boundary co-operation and sustainable development between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia. This international instrument takes into consideration the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Danube River (Sofia, 1994), ratified by the Republic of Croatia in 1996.

The procedure in line with the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (Espoo Convention) has been carried out with Republic of Slovenia for two projects and with Republic of Italy for one

project has been carried out as well and for another is still in progress. Procedure with Republic of Hungary is still underway for one project [3]. This environmental trans-boundary co-operation foster sustainable development as a tool for confidence building and contributes to the regional stability and security.

The main points of co-operation in which **Kosovo** is involved can be summarized as follows: trans-boundary co-operation on the first Balkan Peace Park between Albania, Kosovo (the territory under UN administration) and Montenegro; establishment of regional monitoring systems for air, soil and water for environmental protection and risk prevention; creation of network of environmental institutions, health institutions, academic and science entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other relevant stakeholders.

For **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the co-operation in the area of the protection of natural resources instead of being reason for future conflicts or security threats can be the easiest way to establish political co-operation in trans-boundary issues and very easy can be promoted as a tool for bringing together people and establishing closer political communication between countries sharing natural resources.

The regional co-operation is essential in the cases of the three natural lakes and border massifs shared by the FYR of Macedonia with its neighbors. Detailed data synthesis and analysis should form a basis for decision making and policy planning, built onto the detailed review and existing preliminary studies. Establishment of trans-boundary environmental monitoring and early warning systems is one of the ways to obtain relevant and timely information on state of the environment security.

Among the natural resources shared by **Romania** with its neighbors the most important is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve shared with Ukraine. This area belongs to the natural world heritage under the special protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and, at the same time, protected by many international and bilateral agreements. One of the most recent and important environment security issues in that area represents the actual trials of Ukraine-Romanian negotiations on the Danube – Black Sea navigation canal and the Bystroe canal of the Chilia Branch of the Danube. The Ukrainian authorities failed to meet the legal obligations on operations with trans-border and environmental security impact in the border area between Romania and Ukraine. According to the international community and international organizations (European Commission, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), United States of America (USA), Germany, France etc.) the Ukrainian side should comply with the international procedure in construction of the Bystroe canal.

Serbia and **Montenegro** need to establish: trans-boundary environmental monitoring and early warning systems; interconnection of the systems in protection and rescue from elementary hails, chemical accidents and other major accidents.

In the Republic of Montenegro following “hot spots” are identified, in the field of hazardous activities: Mojkovac (flotation land field with trans-boundary

influences on the Tara river); Pljevlje (termoplant); Podgorica (aluminium factory); Niksic (steel factory); costal zone (communal waste water treatment).

Shared natural resources with Albania are: Skadar Lake and River Bojana.

In the Republic of Serbia, the priority areas include: Bor / Majdanpek (mining area flotation land field); obsolete facilities, or lack of facilities for purification of communal waters; outdated facilities of oil derivatives processing technology (sulfur and heavy metals).

In trans-boundary natural resources, the priority “hot spots” are: Cursed mountain / Prokletije (interest of establishing Peace Park) and Old mountain / Stara planina (there is already established co-operation with Bulgaria and there are UNESCO conditions for entitling protected area).

As the result of documentation for the aspects considered above we may consider that some significant conclusions could be drawn. The environment is the place where all of us are leaving as human being. Therefore the existence of a proper environment was, is and will be a permanent concern of the society in general and of Europe especially. That's way all dramatic changes of the European environment may affect in a way or another its security. As a consequence, measures should be taken for protecting the European environment in order to ensure a proper security for our society.

The real challenge in improving the trans-boundary management of natural resources seems to be the need for improved co-operation and finding incentives for change, especially in areas that are economically depressed. Collaboration in country can be as much a challenge as international collaboration, and a lack of enforcement combined with the poor economic situation in the region has lead to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Overall, there is a need for a common vision and harmonized management goals affecting cross border natural resources management. This will require greater transparency particularly at the local government and institutional levels, collaboration among organizations, capacity building, effective enforcement, and the harmonization of existing and future legislation and policy.

The EU has emerged as a world economic power facing the challenge of redefining its own borders through enlargement, which will lead to a Union of more than half a billion people. In parallel, Europe is confronted with globalization and the need to preserve its cultural identity, diversity and value systems. As regards the challenge of globalization, EU leaders made a strong commitment at the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000. The EU's strategic goal for this decade is to “*become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*”, thereby “*regaining the conditions for full employment and to strengthen social cohesion*” (4).

Enlargement of the EU will reinforce Europe's global influence and create the need to act as a coherent force in world affairs. Through enlargement, the EU is not only creating a larger common market, but is also increasing its political weight in foreign and security policy affairs. An enlarged Union will have to respond to growing expectations with respect to its Common Foreign and Security

Policy, in the interest both of Europeans themselves and of their partners. At a time when public opinion is ever more sensitive to the impact of globalization on the environment, health, labor standards and cultural diversity, the EU is starting to work out the political, economic and social dimensions of global security. With its model for regional integration as a guarantee for peace, the Union is a positive factor for peace around the world.

In the field of environment security the specific environmental projects as “Flagship Projects” for co-operation for neighboring countries could be a solution. Such co-operation is not only taking the form of trans-boundary MoUs, but also through co-operative action in monitoring, planning for remediation work, and joint emergency planning.

Process of institutional development and learning – particularly that required for the accession process to the EU constituted an enormous drain upon limited personnel resources and capacity, while it was clear that many of the areas addressed are vital to the institutionalization of responsible environmental security practices. Real political will and commitment to environmental security improvement is required in order to maintain co-operation.

Real tensions lie beneath the surface – in environment as in other areas. It is clear that co-operative work between countries is uncovering, and shall continue to uncover areas where countries disagree to some extent, or where one party considers itself as suffering environmental harm.

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