

The Role of Acknowledging National Security Threats in Making Security Policies

Dr. Nazmi Issa Said Abu Libdeh

Assistant Professor- political science department - College of Administrative Sciences, Applied Science University, , Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Abstract :

The study had concluded the great importance of how to realize national security threats and their impact on making security policies in countries.

The study had tackled various intellectual trends of national security concept and its different levels. In this context, the study recommends adopting comprehensive and integrated concept which links security to development while making security policies.

As for security policies, the study reached that policy making is greatly affected by the way security threats are acknowledged and determined as well as studying proportional volumes of national capacities and setting security strategies capable of facing these threats procedurally and factually. Consequently, security policies become the link between cognition and perception, on the one hand, an procedural fact in the other. Thus, the study recommends that national security policies to be built by the component agencies not depend on value system of decision maker. In general, developing cooperation relations with other countries greatly participate in overcoming ambiguity, doubt and uncertainty related to the security issue.

Keywords: national security threats, national security policies, national security concept, national security levels and national security elements.

1.1 Introduction

Realizing nature and limits of national security and understanding objectives, interest and supreme national values play a major role in transforming the theoretical concept of national security to kinetic and procedural mechanisms under state national strategy; so as to make security policies which achieve state supreme interests and protect its national security.

The study aims at conceptual and theoretical definition of national security policies' term in two levels. The first shall discuss national security concept and its intellectual developments through various intellectual trends and schools which had tackled the concept and various levels thereof. As for the second level, it is related to determining national security threats, different forms and images of such threats and how to realize them as a necessary beginning for forming kinetic wise and reasonable security policies to challenge.

1.2 Study problem

The greatest problem challenging security policies making is ambiguity and uncertainty which feature national security threats.

1.3 Study assumption

Making effective security policies greatly depends on the way national security threats are realized and ordering challenge priorities thereof.

2.1 National security concept:

Security is one of human main needs. It represents one of the main bases of state and all societies establishment. It includes many elements which are necessary for state establishment. Absence of any element may push the state toward other methods to achieve its national security. In linguistic context, security is opposite to fear. Security means to feel safe, and having conditions for that feeling (1). National security concept, like other social scientific concepts, has no common definition, as well as its threats. This is the same regarding methods, tools and strategies of security accomplishment (2).

Degree of intellectual interest in national security phenomena is related to violence, whether locally or internationally. On the political arena, interest in national security is attributed to WESTVALIA conference in 1648, where national state was historically established. However, scientific studies on the phenomena are relatively modern. Cold war had created the general environment where theoretical definitions attempts of that concept took place. Along with that, complications of understanding all aspects and levels of national security concepts emerged because the theoretical contradiction between national security concepts

is basically a conflict between military and social definitions of national security. Thus, it is difficult to assume that there is a general agreement on national security concept (3), and therefore, many trends in this field had appeared; the most important of which are the following:

- (1) Realistic trend: It is also called valuable strategic school. It considers security an abstract value, which is linked to independence and national dominance values. It considers it typical to military strategic security which is responsible for protecting the state from foreign attacks. This vision was materialized through an integrated intellectual system adopted by power school, and system school, to some extent, in international relations. It had focused on power balance principle and Bipolarity as an independent and major element in determining relations between countries. Foreign policy of states had focused on defense security issues. This resulted in dominance of military security concept which is based on connection between security and military force; since the armed force is considered the guarantee of national security. In light of such concept, foreign policy and national security objectives changed to be keeping state existence and regional integration, safeguarding its interests and supreme value from external threats.(4)

The state is the heart of national security for realistic trend followers. Thus, security is connected to how the state can use its force to face risks threatening its sovereign, independence and political stability against other countries. Therefore, security becomes synonymous tonational benefit and achieving the same based on the military force. In fact, realistic school is considered the reference of security studies which developed during cold war era. This set the seeds of deter and balance theories. This was crystal clear through the prospectivepresented by realistic schools leaders such as Walter Lippman, Arnold Welfares, John Sapiner and others, concerning the national security concept which is “state ability to protect its internal values from external threats”. (5) This definition of national security emphasis on deterring and military force of the state, and the price may be sacrificing other social and economic choices.

National security concept witnessed many developments. Thus, the analytical frame of realistic trend refrains from studying social conflicts in many countries. Besides, those who believe in the military limited definition of security neglect resources direction for development process. This may create police state, and perhaps accumulating such military force may make neighbor countries enter arming competition; which endangers both parties. (6)

- (2) Economic strategic trend: Supporters of this trend give interest in three major aspects related to securing vital economic resources, war economic role and final development as security essence. This trend emerged after Arab-Israel war in 1973 which resulted in exaggeration of power crisis due banning Arab oil exporting to USA and Europe. Thus, securing vital resources became major aspect in American and European security theory. According to Lorenzo Cruse and Joseph Nay, economic security means “absence severe need for economic welfare” and nay threat to its national security. (7)

Thus, this trend believes that state economic condition and its social integration and ability for economic competition are the real challenges the state faces, more than the external threats. Besides, the international system overcomes interactions between countries concerning political and security issues, to include other actions in the international context, under cooperation and interdependence. Hence, the economic power becomes more important to get force instead of military solutions (8). In the same context, Robert Macknmara considered economicdevelopment “security essence” as it overcomes poverty and retardation reasons which cause anxiety, internal rebelling and violence that threats national security. Thus, he refuses to view security as military readiness status only. Security does not mean accumulating guns, though it is part thereof, yet it is not the military force, though it includes it, and not traditional military activity, though it contains it. Security is development, without which we cannot talk about security. Based on the above, Macknmara added another prospective to national security, which was absent for security military definition supporters; which is the internal aspect related to social and economic issues. (9)Similar to the realistic trend, it faced criticisms since it focuses on one aspect only of national security, which is them economic one; especially in developing countries which lack economic resources and suffer expensive cost of political and economic development there.

- (3) Integral trend (or social comprehensive school) which focuses on the comprehensive aspects of national security in its various forms: political, military, economic and social. Subsequently, national security becomes a variable affiliated to an integrated group of independent elements. It creates a form of national security that can explain all phenomena through group of integrated variables (10). This trend extends to include all security aspects with the possibility of amendment and development subject to state social conditions. It is constituent with the “proportionality” of security concept and aspects thereof. It absorbs the complex and changeable variables of national security, which enable amending security policies according to changes of proportional volumes of its components. Thus, the integrated trend of national security means the ability to secure the state entity against internal and external threats and maintaining region unity and social cohesion to achieve development and political stability (11).

2.2 National security levels: There are five main level (12):

- (1) “Individual security”: it has two shapes; the physical shape related to individual security inside the state against any life threats, and the moral shape “psychological” which is related to meeting human psychological needs such as self-esteem and respect.
- (2) “National security”: It is the basic level which the state aims at accomplishing internally and externally. It means the procedures taken by the state to maintain its entity and interests by securing the national from inside and defending the external threats.
- (3) “Sub-Regional security” : It means agreement among some countries in the same region to defend both internal and external threats; such as GCC.
- (4) “Regional security”:It is related to security of some countries in the one region. It forms sub-system under the international system such as Arab countries. They seek military cooperation to defend external threats.
- (5) “Collective/Universal security”:It is the responsibility of the UN. It includes the procedures taken by UNSC to maintain international security through collective – international common work.

In summary of national security previous trends and level, we can say that national security means group of procedures taken by the state, whether solely or collectively with other countries to protect its entity and citizens’ safety and protect its interests and supreme values against internal and external threats.

3.2 National security policies:

Formulating national security policies require determination of main and secondary threats, external and internal; then studying and collecting resources and national capacities under a comprehensive strategy which includes preparation of alternatives and scenarios and taking necessary actions to defend such threats; and subsequently keeping the national security (13).

The launching point toward determining general framework of national security policies is represented by limiting risks which threat state internal values and entity; whether they are internal or external. This means recognizing threats of various types and levels, which can be of political or military or economic or social nature. They may be main or secondary threats, permanent or temporarily. Thus, comprehensive national force aspects are gathered to face such threats; the most important of which are the geopolitical, demographic, political, economic and military aspects (14).

Thereafter, the role of the agencies responsible for formulating national security policies appears; which means transforming general principles of national security concept into political facts under high national strategy. The ability of formulating effective national policies depends on recognition of threats, on the one hand, and forming national obligations, on the other hand, and building institutions which can mobilize such capacities on the final hand. Hence, national security policies become the link between recognition and cognition, on the one hand, and procedural and practical aspect, on the other hand (15). Based on the above, understanding states ‘national security policies require studying the following variables:

1. Realizing national security threats: security policy is determined by decision makers, subject to their recognition of state main interests arising from internal condition requirements as well as regional and international intersections. In other words, it means their recognition of work and action environment which commonly affect and be affected while formulating security policies and determining work strategies to implement such polices. Recognition here means awareness of objective issues related to

certain circumstance. This is considered one of the psychosocial environment aspects of the decision maker; in addition to his beliefs and visions which all affect the type of policies adopted by him (16). As for threat, it strategically means that contradiction between national interests and objectives between two or more countries have reached the worst level where no amicable solution exists, and thus endangering state security. This may lead the conflicting parties, or any party thereof, to using armed force (17). Hence, the applicable reasonable security policies greatly depend on how the decision maker recognizes the circumstance and targeted threats. Misrecognition based policies may lead to war and thus, state national security threats are escalated instead of ending.

In this context, there are many standards used to classify national security threats. As for threat nature, it can be permanent or temporarily, direct or indirect, existing or potential. As for source, it had been a tradition to differentiate between internal and external threats. Finally, as for severity, there are main and secondary threats (18).

National security threats have various types. In addition to military threats, there are other political, economic and social aspects (19). In summary, recognizing threat sources is an integrated process where three levels are involved: decision making, elite level and opinion leaders then nationals' level. Similarly, the general national agreement on national objectives and such threats vision are very important to raise the state ability to mobilize its resources to defend risks and threats.

(2) State comprehensive force: To evaluate state national strength, we must examine and measure strength points thereof to realize the reasons behind being describe as a strong or weak state. In this regard, there is a general agreement that national security policies are based on major elements which include demographic and social, decade and ideological, political, economic and geopolitical elements and finally the military force with all aspects thereof, which is the result of gathering and mobilizing all previously, referred state resources (20).

In the context of measuring state national power, there are three main trends: the first is based on power physical elements which can be directly measures such as measuring state military and economic power through group of quantitative measurable indicators. The second trend includes two groups of physical and moral elements to measure state power; whether by merging or separating the two groups. Finally, the third trend which measure state power, if applies, by measuring the ability to mobilize and apply state strength points in certain condition(s), or in criss-crossbilateral or collective – limited regional relations – or in universal level (21).

(3) security policies formation institutions: in light of governments' commitment with national security, they mainly depend on specialized agencies which pursue and accurately analyze all current developments, they prepare comprehensive and objective assessments of national security, and give absolute disposal of the same in decision makers' hands. This means that it is necessary to establish national agencies which are assigned the task of defining various alternative and selection to draw sound and effective security policies. Generally, threats' sources identification task is assigned to three state agencies, which are defense, foreign affairs and intelligence agencies; which shall provide their visions to the authority socialized in setting and formulating security policies. This specialized agency is often "National Security Council"., and in case it does not exist, the agency responsible for taking state high political decisions shall form security policies. US National Security Council, established in 1947, is the ideal form and reference worldwide. National security counselor is often the senior political and strategic counselor for the president (22).

(4) National security implementation strategies: Security policies transfer power and capacities to capabilities through plans, programs and strategies which represent security policies outputs as well as methods and ways of defending threat. This consequently leads to national security protection. There are three levels of security to be put into consideration while formulating and setting security policies. The first level is the security of citizen daily life such as providing solution for unemployment and poverty problems and lifting restrictions on his basic freedom... etc. the second level is related to security stability and social peace and facing people divisions which can cause civil wars, violence, terrorism and political disorders. The third level is national entity security and safeguarding national interests against external threats. This abides political leaders by developing their international relations, using power when necessary to achieve such interests (23).

These three levels are connected circles which are considered the core of desired security policies. National security of states requires consideration of regional security and other external security levels because security and national interests are directly and indirectly affected by one or more of these levels.

3.1 Conclusions:

1. The way national security threats are realized is greatly important and how they impact formation of state security policies of various intellectual trends of national security definition and various levels thereof.
2. Forming these policies is significantly affected by the way threats are realized and determined as well as studying proportional volumes of national capacities, and setting security strategy capable of defending such threat procedurally and practically. Consequently, security policies become the link between realization and perception on the one hand, and the procedural fact on the other hand.

3.2 Recommendations:

1. It is necessary to adopt the comprehensive and integrated definition which link security to development while formulating security policies.
2. It is necessary that competent agencies adopt national security policies, not depending on decision maker value system.
3. Developing cooperative relations with other countries greatly participate in overcoming ambiguity, doubt and uncertainty in regard of security issues.

References:

- (1) Michael Dillon, Politics of security: Towards a political philosophy of continental thought, (London and New York, Routledge, 1st published, 1996), P.121
- (2) Nazmi Abu Libda, impact of international system changes on the Arab national security from 1985 to 1995, Master Thesis (AL AL Beet University, Bet Al Hikma Institute 1999) pages 9-10.
- (3) Abdul Monaem AL Mashaat, Modern Arab National security Theory (Cairo: Al Mawqf AL Arabi 1stEdition 1989) page 15.
- (4) Hans Morgenthau, power and ideology in international politics, (New York: the free press, 1961) pp.170 – 177.
- (5) Ali El Din Helal, Arab National Security, origins study, Arab Affairs, volume 35, January 1984, page 10. For more, refer to HamedRabea, Arab National Security Theory (Cairo, Dar Al Mawqf Al Arabi, 1984) pages 43-56.
- (6) Abdul Moneam Al Mashat, Consideration in the Analysis of National security in the Third World, ph.D.Dissertation, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1982, p.13
- (7) Abdul Moneam Al Mashat, Modern Arab National Security Theory, previous reference pages 17-18.
- (8) Noam Chomsky, “After the cold war: U.S.Middle East Policy”, in, Phyllis Bennis and Michel Moushabeck, (eds.), Beyond the Storm, (New York: Olive Branch, 1991), p.80.
- (9) Robert Macknamre, Security Essence, translated by YounisShaheen (Cairo: Egyptian General Authority for writing and publishing 1970), chapters eight and nine.
- (10) Lion G Martin, “ New Horizons of National Security in Middle East” Gulf Affairs, volume 14, March 2000 , page 31.
- (11) Ahmed Fouad Raslan, National Security definition, Master Thesis (Cairo University, Faculty of Economy and Political sciences, 1977) page 24.
- (12) Barry Buzan, people states and fear: the national security problem in international relations, (Great Britain, Wheasheaf, 1983) pp.18 – 34. Also refer to : Abdul Moneam Al Mashat, Modern Arab National security theory, previous reference , pages 14-15.
- (13) Amen Huwaidi, Arab and Africa and common security issues in Arab and Africa (Biuret: Arab Unity studies center, 1st edition, January 1984) pages 581-582.
- (14) Ahmed Abdul Halim , Egyptian National security challenges in nineteenth”, Cairo University, Political Studies and Searches Center 1989) page 2.
- (15) Abdul Moneam Al Mashat, Modern Arab National Security Theory, previous reference, page 128.

- (16) Mohamed Al Sayed Salim, foreign policy analysis (Cairo: AL Nahda AL MasryaLibrary 1989) pages 409-410.
- (17) Mostafa Elwi, Egypt's International attitude during May crisis 1967, Doctorate thesis (Cairo University, Faculty of economy and political sciences 1981) page 228.
- (18) David Garnam, National security bases, application to UAE" UAE lecture series. UAE Strategic Studies and Searches Center , volume 21, edition 1, 1998, pages 24-25.
- (19) Mohamed Qadri Saeed, security definition, Youth Political encyclopedia (Cairo, Strategic and Political Studies center , AL Ahram 2000) pages 59-60. Also read: S.Hoffman and Others, policies for common security, Sipri, (London and Philadelphia, Taylor and Francis, 1983) pp. 54 – 55.
- (20) Mohamed Al Sayed Salim, Foreign policy analysis, previous source, pages 145-213.
- (21) Gamal Zahran, how to measure countries force and possibilities of Arab Israeli conflict development (Beirut: Arab Unity studies center, edition 1, 2006) pages 35-45.
- (22) Abdul Moneam Al Mashat, Modern Arab National Security Theory, previous reference, page 120.
- (23) Abdul Moneam AL Mashat, theoretical framework of Arab National security (Cairo: Arab Studies and Searches Institute, 1993) pages 13-14.