

National Security Risk Assessment in a Time of COVID-19: Anticipatory Governance and Indicative Approach.

Abstract

Complex nature of modern challenges and threats, turbulence of the geopolitical situation, financial, economic and energy crises, along with natural and man-made disasters carry significant risks to the national security of any state. The unexpected intensity of the COVID-19, coupled with other hybrid risks, revealed significant deficiencies in the national security risk assessment (NSRA) system.

In this regard, it is important to create a sufficient number of theoretical and practical mechanisms to assess these risks. Nowadays, a problem could be solved by such methods as Foresight and Delphi on the basis of expert's assessments (Morgan et al., 2000; Florig et al., 2001; Willis Et al., 2018). The limitation of this method in relation to risk assessment is the fact that developed methodology pays considerable attention to the classification and characteristics of the materiality of risk, leaving the evaluation process itself as "deliberative". On the other hand, some scholars use quantitative methods (even in combination with a historical approach to forecasting) to assess the components of the national security of the state (Bilusich et al., 2015; Mennen et al., 2015). Finally, indicative methods are disseminated and persecuted to assess the effectiveness of public administration, where the need for a new, instrumental paradigm of public administration as a "data-dependent" decision-making process has already been stated (Barabashev et al., 2019).

At the same time, the existing possibilities for assessing national security risks are based on the concept of anti-crisis management, when appropriate involvement of experts for "brainstorming" is carried out during or after existing threat. Although, mechanisms of such assessment require a greater degree of elaboration in order to increase the preventive function of national security management, when the degree of risk influence should be formed in advance due to indicative assessments in the historical perspective. The nature of consequences from the occurrence of even unforeseen risks (or so called "black swans") can be significantly minimized through the active use of a system of indicative assessments that can identify trends in the spread of natural risks. Experience of COVID-19 shows, regardless of the origin of the virus, its spread is carried out within the framework of a pandemic, and individual steps by governments in the health system or in the hydrocarbon markets can improve or worsen the overall national security situation.

Thus, there is a problem in building a unified risk assessment mechanism as part of the public administration in such spheres as national security and defense.

Implementation of the Anticipatory Governance approach as a system of government actions aimed at early identification of the most dangerous trends through monitoring of critical indicators should become one of the considerable interests for “post-COVID” state. Determining trends and fluctuations of risks would allow us to assess its impact on the national security in order to reduce the negative effects of accidental circumstances and threats.