

2. *Environmental safety of economic activities as a national security issue: environmental safety from the public policy perspective*

Environmental issues are now in the public policy agenda worldwide. Moreover, environmental deterioration and natural resource depletion have been perceived as issues that compromise national security in many countries (Perelet, 1994; Brock, 1997; Benjamin, 2000; Myshko, 2003). Moreover, recent academic and policy debate on environmental threats to humankind resulted in defining the concept of *environmental security* (Perelet, 1994; Brock, 1997; Dubovik, 2003; Myshko, 2003).

Although widely cited in official statements, policies, and international agreements, environmental security is an emerging concept without generally accepted cognitive model. Based on the review the definitions by Glenn and Gordon (2001) and Myshko (2003) the author suggests to define environmental security as *a complex of policies aimed at protecting humans (individuals, communities, societies and the mankind) and their environment from any hazards related to natural and man-made changes in the biophysical environment.*

This definition stress the idea of the need for preventing and repairing environment (a) for securing human life supporting functions and (b) for the moral value of the environment itself. In addition, it explicitly makes the concept of environmental security free from ‘military’ connotation very popular in the current public policy domain. Military actions and violent conflicts are just one of many environmental security threats; ‘peaceful’ unsustainable resource consumption, obsolete technologies with high potential to damage the environment and mismanagement at hazardous facilities that may result to environmental accidents are much more important sources of environmental damage and resulted losses of human receptors (Glenn and Gordon, 2000; Myshko, 2003). Meanwhile, managing adverse environmental impacts of economic activities, which are the focus of the current research, are regulated by *environmental safety* provisions.

Glenn and Gordon (2001) made a clear distinction between ‘environmental safety’ and ‘environmental security’ concepts¹. They are different in the subject to protective actions: environmental safety is focused on making the human activities environmentally safe and sound, while ‘environmental security’ deals with adverse environmental impacts on humans and their vital interests.

¹ It is important to note that in several languages (one of them is Russian) there is only one word for both 'security' and 'safety,' one can find the difference between them only in use.

The concept of environmental security, especially its threats and policy responsibilities have become subject to huge academic debate. Some policy analysts even argue that there is no need for environmental security policies *per se* since this linking environment and national security may lead to potential militarization of environmental politics (Benjamin, 2000) and making environmental degradation a fashionable ploy in geopolitical discussions (Moss, 1992). At the same time, environmental security has already been integrated into national security policies of some nation-states; the Russian Federation is among them (Myshko, 2003; Dubovik, 2003).

The concept of environmental security is reflected in a number of Russian strategic initiatives on homeland security including the Concept for National Security of the Russian Federation (President of the Russian Federation, 1997). The Russian Federation is one of few countries that has an official definition of the environmental security²; its latest edition was provided in the Law on Environmental Protection of 2002 (FARF, 2002). Assuring environmental security is referred as a strategic goal the State and society seek to achieve (President of the Russian Federation, 1997; Government of the Russian Federation, 2002; Myshko, 2003).

Although the systemic approach for developing and implementing homeland environmental security policies has yet to develop, Russian policy scientists and policy made considerable progress in developing the conceptual framework for the policymaking in this field. For the current research the following issues are important:

- environmental security is characterized as a component of the national system together with other types of security (SSRF, 1992); personal and societal dimensions of environmental security were identified (Myshko, 2003);
- environmental security is now perceived as a general concept to be applicable for international law and co-operation; some authors stress environmental security of regions and populations of these regions (see, e.g. Dubovik (2003)). The extreme diversity of the country and large areas classified as areas of environmental disaster requires targeted environmental security policies adjusted to the regional context.

² The first official definition of environmental security was suggested by the Security Council of the Russian Federation and described this phenomenon as “safety of natural environment and vital interests of citizens, society, the state from internal and external impacts, adverse processes and trends in development that may affect human health, biodiversity and sustainable functioning of ecosystems, and survival of humankind. Environmental security is an integral part of Russia's national security” (Security Council of the Russian Federation, 1996; 55).

- a number of key national *environmental security threats* are identified (Myshko, 2003); policy targets for assuring environmental security were formulated and reflected in key strategic initiatives on national security and environmental policy (SSRF, 1992; President of the Russian Federation, 1994; President of the Russian Federation, 1997; Government of the Russian Federation, 2002; FARF, 2002).

Industrial accidents that result in large-scale contamination and or other damage to the environmental media are considered as the most immediate threats to environmental security especially at the local and regional level in the Russian Federation. In turn, the lack of effective mechanisms for prevention and compensation of environmental damage and harm to human health resulted from accidental events is mentioned among key weaknesses of the current public environmental policy compromise environmental security (Myshko, 2003).

Therefore, there is no doubt that effective policies on regulating industrial operations that aim at ensuring environmental safety should be an integral part of the overall strategy for assuring environmental security both at national and regional level. Nowadays there is a number of legal and economic tools for managing industrial risks to the environment including environmental insurance. In the following chapter the author analyzes the current role of insurance in assuring environmental safety in the international perspective.