



## БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ В ИЗМЕНЯЮЩЕМСЯ МИРЕ: СОЦИОГУМАНИТАРНЫЙ ФАКТОР

## SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD: A SOCIO-HUMANITARIAN FACTOR

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Research article / Научная статья

### Humanitarian and Social Components of International Security

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**Abstract.** Since the second half of the XX century, the importance of social and humanitarian resources has been increasing. This process intensified in the XXI century, which is reflected in the sphere of international security. The study analyzes the mechanisms through which the social and humanitarian resources affect international security problems, solving or escalating them. If the Copenhagen School began to include the social and humanitarian phenomena in the security sphere, this research focuses on how social and humanitarian resources are used in the security sphere (including in the military field). At the same time, it claims that the growing involvement of social and humanitarian resources in security issues does not mean a decrease in the importance of military and political instruments. The author considers the evolution of the use of social and humanitarian resources in the field of international security from the Cold War period to the present. They show that, in general, the social and humanitarian resources are becoming more diverse in their tools, as well as more and more important in solving international security problems. They note that in conflict situations social and humanitarian resources are used in two ways: 1) for the peaceful settlement of conflicts and 2) in order to win. In addition to conflicts, social and humanitarian resources can also be applied to such areas of international security as terrorism, migration, biogenic threats, threats related.

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## Гуманитарная и социальная составляющая международной безопасности

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**Аннотация.** Начиная со второй половины XX в. усиливается значение социально-гуманитарного ресурса. Особенно интенсивно этот процесс стал развиваться в XXI в., что нашло отражение в сфере международной безопасности. В исследовании проведен анализ, как, с помощью каких механизмов осуществляется воздействие социально-гуманитарного ресурса при решении или эскалации проблем международной безопасности. В статье концептуализируется понятие «гуманитаризация мировой политики» применительно к сфере безопасности, а также получают дальнейшее теоретическое развитие идеи представителей Копенгагенской школы в отношении к гуманитарным аспектам международной безопасности. При этом отмечено, что усиление включенности социально-гуманитарного ресурса в вопросы безопасности не означает снижение значимости военно-политических инструментов. Рассмотрены вопросы эволюции использования социально-гуманитарного ресурса в сфере международной безопасности с периода холодной войны по настоящее время. Показано, что в целом социально-гуманитарный ресурс становится все более разнообразным по своему инструментарию и все более значимым при решении вопросов международной безопасности. Отмечено, что в конфликтных ситуациях социально-гуманитарный ресурс используется, во-первых, для мирного урегулирования конфликтов, а во-вторых, с целью одержать победу. Наряду с конфликтными ситуациями проанализированы такие области применения социально-гуманитарного ресурса в сфере международной безопасности, как терроризм, миграция, биогенные угрозы, угрозы, связанные с изменением экологии и климата.

**Ключевые слова:** социально-гуманитарный компонент, международная безопасность, Копенгагенская школа, секьюритизация гуманитарной сферы, гуманитарная интервенция, информационные войны, фейковые новости, урегулирование конфликтов, терроризм, биогенные угрозы, климатические угрозы

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## Introduction

Security is a traditional area of international studies. Wars and conflicts have always been accompanied by actions and means somehow related to the humanitarian and social spheres. In traditional societies, war paint performed multiple functions, including symbolically intimidating the enemy [Makarenko 2018], as well as boosting self-confidence. The further historical development saw the improvement of the non-military means of affecting the enemy. However, by the mid-20th century, they were largely reduced to various forms of propaganda, which, nevertheless, could be very sophisticated.

Since the mid-20th century, after the large-scale humanitarian catastrophes of the two world wars, security issues have become excessively intertwined with humanitarian issues. The UNESCO Constitution, adopted in 1945, states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, close attention was drawn to the issues of humanitarian aid, the protection of women and children in conflicts, and so on. By the end of the 20th century, the security problem concerning humanitarian and social issues came to the fore, both in theory and in practice. The representatives of the Copenhagen School made a significant contribution to the theoretical aspect: they identified a separate level of security — the social level, which included the security aspects caused by migration, international crime, poverty in the “Global South”, and the danger of Westernization [Buzan, Waever, de Wilde 1998]. The UN also paid special attention to humanitarian security issues [Bokeria 2017]. As a result, the number of UN Security Council resolutions on social and humanitarian issues increased, and the range of issues discussed in this area also expanded [Lebedeva, Ustinova 2020]. All these aspects are widely reflected in the scientific works, including those by Russian authors (see, for example, [Капто, 2016; Sergunin 2005]). Nevertheless, here, as is the case for other areas of international studies, new perspectives are emerging, especially those related to the aggravating European security issues.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Constitution. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php\\_URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php_URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## **The Aim and the Theoretical Basis of the Study**

The aim of this study is to analyze how, through which mechanisms is the social and humanitarian resources enacted to solve or escalate international security issues. If the representatives of the Copenhagen School drew attention to the fact that social and humanitarian phenomena were included in the security sphere [Waever 1995], this research focuses on how the social and humanitarian resources is used in the security sphere (including the military sphere).

The hypothesis states that, firstly, the social and humanitarian influences in the sphere of international security is becoming more and more significant. Secondly, as it developed, it became more complicated in the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Meanwhile, it should be emphasized that the humanitarian impact in conflict and war can both be a manifestation of humanity, for example, the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in conflict, and serve as a means of combat, for example, the use of fakes.

The social and humanitarian spheres in this case is understood in its broad sense and includes the existing political organization of the world with its principles, institutions, the nature of the actors' interactions, etc., i.e., it constitutes the social and political organization of the world, currently undergoing a radical transformation [Lebedeva 2016]. That transformation itself poses a threat to international security, as the old structures and mechanisms are breaking down. At the same time, the changing political organization of the world is influenced by various actors, which, among other things, use social and humanitarian resources to exercise influence in the field of security. Even though we usually talk about the humanitarian resource in international relations, it seems more relevant to refer to the social and humanitarian resources, since the humanitarian resource is always directed to certain social groups.

The study is based on the securitization theory by the Copenhagen School. The author uses discourse analysis as the main method of study.

## **The Social and Humanitarian Components of World Politics**

There were several reasons why the social and humanitarian resources became so important in world politics in the second half of the 20th century — the beginning of the 21st century. Firstly, the emergence of the nuclear weapons and the realization of the consequences of their possible use led to the urge to strengthen alternative means of influence, including those from the social and humanitarian fields. Secondly, the globalization made the world interdependent. Social and humanitarian problems of the developing countries became significant for the

whole world. This phenomenon expanded to all areas, including security issues. Thirdly, in the world as a whole, the role of the human factor sharply increased and, as a result, world politics became humanized, i.e., the social and humanitarian factors penetrated into all spheres of human activities [Lebedeva 2021]. Finally, the development of communication and information technologies presented new challenges to how influence was exercised, and the improvement of propaganda became insufficient.

The security sphere was no exception to the ongoing changes. At the same time, due to the “transparency” of national borders, the line between national and international security became blurred. Intrastate conflicts and wars started internationalizing. Such “erasing” of borders is clearly observed, for example, in the context of migration and security issues (see, for example, [Ryazantsev 2003]).

Given the increased attention to social and humanitarian impacts in the security sphere, the second half of the 20th century saw an expansion in the tools for such influence. These included various war prevention and conflict resolution technologies, such as diverse negotiation and mediation procedures involving diplomats and politicians. These tools received extensive coverage and analysis in the literature of the 1970s and 1980s (see, for example, [Raiffa 1982; Fisher, Ury 1981; Druckman 1973]). Alongside the official procedures, technologies and formats were developed to involve the academic community in the analysis and prevention of wars, as well as in conflict resolution. These include the Pugwash Movement, where scientists discussed ways to prevent the nuclear war; the Dartmouth Conferences of Soviet and American intellectuals used to discuss various problems, including disarmament issues; the Club of Rome, where P. Berger presented a report, raising the problem of morality and identity in the conflicts in pluralistic societies [Berger, 1998]. Furthermore, during the Cold War, professors from leading American and British universities would organize academic seminars for conflicting parties to find a mutually acceptable solution (in particular, on the conflicts in Cyprus, the Middle East, etc.) (see, for example, [Burton 1969]).

### **The development of Humanitarian and Social Means of Influence in the Field of Security at the End of the XX–XXI Centuries**

At the end of the 20th century, as the social and humanitarian factors intensively penetrated the field of security, new phenomena appeared, while the old ones intensified or were revived. Influenced by the ongoing political changes in the world, Western countries started intensively implementing the idea of humanitarian intervention, when humanitarian issues were the basis or often

the reason for the military involvement of external participants in the conflict. One of the most obvious examples of humanitarian intervention was the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. The implementation of humanitarian intervention has been criticized by both researchers (see, for example, [Hehir 2008, Khudaikulova 2002]) and politicians. In 2001, The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty prepared a report for the UN, calling on the international community to reject military conflict resolution methods and to focus on non-military methods of protecting the civilian population during conflicts<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the UN report clearly suggested to focus excessively on the social and humanitarian components for affecting conflicting parties.

Ironically, with the end of the Cold War, the attention to negotiation and mediation technologies decreased: in particular, there was a decrease in both the amount of relevant research and the number of actual negotiations, which is especially evident in the military and political sphere. During the late 1980s and the 1990s, the declining attention to negotiations can be partially explained by the illusion of the “end of history” as a result of the “victory of democracy all over the world” and, consequently, the assumption that, based on the theory of the democratic world, there is no need to coordinate interests. However, that assumption, even if it exists, is fundamentally incorrect, since, democracy and democratization, first of all, rely on the coordination of interests through negotiations [Sergeev 1999].

The lacking attention to the technologies of coordination of international interests in the 21st century is harder to explain. As a hypothesis, it can be suggested that since negotiations require the sides “to abide by the rules”, then under the terms of this changing world, where the Westphalian system is subject to erosion, the system of interstate relations, as well as the political systems of many countries, are in the process of transformation simultaneously [Lebedeva 2016], there is little demand for negotiations directed at ensuring international security. With the chaotic basis of the global international political organization, the implementation of agreements stays in question.

As noted by J. Nye over the centuries, with the evolution of technology, the sources of power for war have often changed [Nye 2021:196]. This became especially evident in the 21st century, when social and humanitarian resources transformed the wars. These resources are currently used in two ways. On the one hand, humanitarian assistance, which primary focuses on the least protected segments of the population during the conflicts and wars, provided on a significant scale by the states, international organizations, and non-state actors. There is an extensive amount of Russian and foreign literature on the problems of humanitarian aid, its formation and development [Borisov 2017].

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<sup>2</sup> Iskenderov, P. Humanitarian interventions in the context of geopolitics. October 26, 2012. *RIAC website*. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/gumanitarnye-interventsii-v-kontekste-geopolitiki/>

On the other hand, social and humanitarian resources began to act as a source of power. As a result, new types of wars have emerged — hybrid wars, assuming the use of various means of influencing the enemy [Belozarov, Solovyov 2015], as well as information wars, which can be considered as an integral part of hybrid wars. These war types, in a broad sense, include social and humanitarian impacts. One of the methods of waging information wars is the creation of fakes, i.e., the deliberate use of false information [Gelfert 2018]. The analysis of the active usage of social and humanitarian resources during confrontations conducted by A. I. Podberezkin and A. V. Zhukov showed that the influence that information possesses in the modern world allows it to resolve issues previously resolved by military, economic and other means [Podberezkin, Zhukov 2015].

When a third party is involved, information may be deemed to have an indirect, rather than a direct impact. For example, the information a state is interested in can be transmitted by a non-state actor. Furthermore, it can extend from transferring information to, for instance, creating an image. Thus, in order to reduce image losses, the state may resort to the use of private military companies (PMCs).

The problem of information security is a separate large area of practice and research. In this case, it is important to note the following. First of all, information and communication technologies by themselves, of course, represent a significant part of the social and humanitarian impacts. Secondly, information can be transferred across national borders without any difficulties, which creates problems for both international and national security. Thirdly, the influence of information in the field of security is used by both governmental and non-governmental structures. In some cases, this makes it especially difficult to determine who initiated and/or is exercising the influence.

In the recent years, along with information and communication technologies, other technologies, such as cognitive technologies, big data analysis, and artificial intelligence, have been actively developing. Although research in this field is emerging, it is still difficult to give a detailed answer to the question as to how exactly, in what forms and volumes these technologies will be included in the field of international security [Dafoe 2019; Horowitz, Scharre 2021; Engelke 2020]. Nevertheless, it is obvious that this is another source of the social and humanitarian resources in the field of security.

Another area of security where the social and humanitarian resources becomes a specific weapon is terrorism. B. Hoffman, tracing the history of the development of modern international terrorism, from Al-Qaeda to the Islamic State<sup>3</sup>, shows how terrorist organizations are increasingly paying more attention to such means of influence as the use of the Internet, videos, social networks to affect public opinion and recruit new supporters [Hoffman 2017]. Alongside that, in order to have an influence on the audience, terrorists effectively use

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<sup>3</sup> The terrorist organizations Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are banned in Russia.

a combination of traditional and new technologies [Styshinsky 2016]. Why is this happening? It is obvious that, from both military and economic point of view, modern terrorist organizations are incomparably weaker than the leading states. Therefore, they start relying on the social and humanitarian components. In addition to that, the collapse of the bipolar system with its confrontation in the ideological field and corresponding identification has created a vacuum. Terrorist organizations took advantage of this by offering alternatives to social organization [Malashenko 2006].

Under such circumstances, obviously, the fight against terrorism cannot be limited only to advanced military and economic means. The social and humanitarian components is taking a leading role in the fight against terrorism. The problem is that fighting international terrorism for more than 20 years the international community has, without any doubt, caused significant damage to the organizational structures of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State<sup>4</sup>, however, at the same time, it has not countered it much in terms of ideology. As a result, the terrorist organizational structures can be revived on other territories and under other names, retaining the same attitudes and methods of influence.

The relevance of the social and humanitarian components for modern security is reflected in documents, materials, and organizational structures, including military and political organizations. For instance, in 2014, the NATO established the Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE), the purpose of which is to coordinate NATO's activities in the field of communication. The center's policy papers include communication means such as public diplomacy (communication with the civilian population so that it understands and supports NATO's activities), military aspects of public relations (using the media to inform the public about NATO's policies, operations and activities), information operations (conducting NATO military consultations and coordinating the activities of the members of the Alliance in the military information sphere), psychological operations (carrying out psychological operations using means of communication)<sup>5</sup>. However, despite going under different names, all those means are actually reduced to propaganda, i.e., imposing their opinions, positions, etc. The effect of such influence, even if it's achieved, will only be temporal. At the same time, terrorist organizations, when influencing the external audience, instead of propaganda, actively use social and humanitarian resources linked to "soft power", which, unlike propaganda, assumes long-term interaction, rejection of manipulation and coercion, emphasis on attracting the partner. According to J. Nye, Osama bin Laden did not force the pilots who staged the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and did not pay them; instead, he attracted them with his extremist ideology [Nye 2021]. This example shows that "soft power" can also be used to negatively affect international security.

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<sup>4</sup> The terrorist organizations Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are banned in Russia.

<sup>5</sup> NATO StratCom COE. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <https://stratcomcoe.org/>



The social and humanitarian resources is no less evident in the sphere of “soft security”, i.e., the sphere of non-military threats. Thus, the connection between the problem of migration and security in world politics began to be discussed especially intensively at the end of the 20th century, in particular, in connection with the ongoing integration and globalization and, as a consequence, the influx of labor migration, which in developed countries included illegal migration. Firstly, migration, being caused, among other things, by social and humanitarian factors, affects various aspects of security: the economic aspect [Ryazantsev, Dudin, Khokonov 2016], the social aspect [Tkacheva 2011], etc. According to D. Bigo, who noted even before the migration crisis in Europe, in addition to the means of migration control, security issues should also be resolved by using the results of academic research, additionally making the scientists take responsibility for their results [Bigo 2001]. In other words, it underlines the inclusion of humanitarian and social components in the development of migration control in order to ensure security.

Secondly, the very problem of migration generates several social and humanitarian problems, which became especially obvious in the 21st century with the mass migration flows to Europe from the Middle East and North Africa [Glukhova 2018]. Migration contributes to the rise of identity and the fragmentation of societies into smaller groups with different cultural norms and traditions, which is often perceived as a threat [Kazarinova 2019]. The abrupt withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan has caused another wave of refugees, this time, however, to a large extent drawn towards the countries of Central Asia, where, along the actual social and humanitarian problems of migration in the field of security, another, perhaps more acute problem arises — the danger of the spread of radical terrorism ideology.

The COVID-19 pandemic, that swept the world in early 2020, clearly demonstrated the importance of social and humanitarian resources in the face of biogenic threats. The coronavirus pandemic broke out suddenly. As a result, the world has faced a whole range of both social and humanitarian problems. At first, several researchers noted that international organizations were not ready for a quick and adequate response. Such reproaches were made to the Group of Twenty, which needed to take a more attentive approach in dealing health issues, biological diversity, and climate change [Kirton 2020]. According to A. Kortunov, “as the global epidemiological situation worsened, it became increasingly clear that neither the UN Security Council nor the Group of Twenty were ready to assume the role of an effective global headquarters in the fight against the pandemic. Within such associations as the EU, ASEAN, and the EAEU, starting right from the very first weeks of the pandemic, various, sometimes significantly different national strategies for countering the coronavirus have emerged.” In other words, in case of a biogenic threat, the existing structures of global governance, at least at the initial stages, were not ready to act coherent. Thus, the system (i.e., the socio-political organization

of the world) of ensuring international security during crises has shown insufficient effectiveness.

Secondly, the pandemic has exacerbated several security issues, in particular, the need of enforcing humanitarian law. This is especially true for the accessibility of medical care and means of protection in conflicts, the refusal to politicize the pandemic, leading to the complication of international relations and other issues<sup>6</sup>.

Speaking of the COVID-19 pandemic, J. Nye noted that resolving the problems of climate change or pandemics with military resources is impossible, while disproportionately little attention is paid to the problems of financing health care in the world. And all this happens despite the fact that the COVID 19 virus has killed more Americans than were killed in all our wars (in the US–ML wars) since 1945, while the 1918 flu pandemic claimed more lives than all four years of the First World War [Nye 2021].

Finally, there is another important manifestation of the humanitarian and social components in the security sphere. The ecological problems and problems of climate change have long been discussed within the framework of international security. In 2015, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>7</sup> were developed and adopted by the UN General Assembly, which, in addition to ecology, included social issues. Thus, security problems are directly related not only to environmental, but also to social and managerial aspects. At the business level, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance) has been developed, which represents specific principles and measures for the implementation of the SDGs. It is likely that such principles and measures covering the three areas — environmental, social, and managerial — will be developed at the global level for something bigger than just business, while their violation will be deemed as a threat to international and national security.

## Conclusion

The world has changed dramatically in the recent decades. Traditional military security resources, and even relatively new economic and energy resources, are today proving important but insufficient. Social and humanitarian means of influence are increasingly penetrating the security sphere, used both to reduce tensions and to win. Of course, the increased involvement of social and humanitarian resources in security issues does

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<sup>6</sup> Krivorotov, A., Cole, J. & Dodds, K. The Coronavirus Pandemic: Global Challenges Require Global Cooperation. *RIAC*. 12 March 2021. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/pandemiya-koronavirusa-globalnye-problemy-trebuyut-globalnogo-vzaimodeystviya/>

<sup>7</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals. *UNIDO*. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <http://www.unido.ru/overview/mdg/>

not mean a decrease in the importance of military and political instruments. We are rather talking about the diversification of tools for influence in the security sphere and the strengthening of the social and humanitarian resources in various ways, ranging from increased attention to negotiations and mediation procedures to the use of fakes and extremist ideology. It appears that this trend will continue and intensify in the future. At the same time, new areas will appear that were previously on the periphery of attention, such as biogenic threats, artificial intelligence, and which will obviously include social and humanitarian resources and influence tools.

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