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MILITARY – POLITICAL CONNECTIONS TO FOOD SECURITY

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Abstract: *By the article analyzes the current state of the economy of the Slovak Republic in the conditions of a relatively open market, which has its parallelism with the economic development of almost all Central and Eastern European countries after 1989. Changes called the restructuring of industry and agriculture, which must have suffered a particularly sensitive to perceive not only from the aspect of food, but also national security. The critical situation of food security, despite all the military-political the repeated creating guarantees and benefits of the global market, the risks that must be taken into account in the framework of strategic planning in the armed forces.*

Keywords: *Defense, crisis, agriculture, manufacture, consumption, food security, the armed forces*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades there has been a lot of reasonable criticism of the authors of the so-called restructuralization of Slovak industry and agriculture. The present-day gloomy state of economy development, while it would be best to call it an economic meltdown, is at best attributed to naivety, at worst to an intentional act of politicians when releasing the Slovak market to other nations' companies and international corporations. We will probably never find out who and how participated in harming the public interest, what the provision was for this destruction of our economy. The fact is that the political and private caginess deprived Slovakia from the possibility to

become a competition on foreign markets, but Slovakia also lost the ability to maintain socially acceptable limit of unemployment. It became a country, which in the crucial segments of goods is dependent on external supplies, comparable to the countries of Equatorial Africa.

Secondary reason for the continuing process of uselessness of the Slovak agriculture when meeting the domestic demand and the reason for export abroad was also accepting inconvenient additional conditions for this department by EU. These are well-known facts and that is why we are going to deal with them. We can also mention the fact that the unlimited access of

international chain stores to the Slovak market has eliminated several thousands of small businesses – vendors, which has significantly reflected in the agrosector by the loss of purchasers of Slovak agricultural production because in comparison to international businesses it was more convenient for small businesses to enter into contracts with local suppliers.

2. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

In spite of the mentioned objections to the activities of the (ir)responsible, we can consider all the facts natural and inevitable changes related to the process of globalization, which have affected all European or world countries. Globalization brings along also some space for corrupt behaviour and activities of politicians in a broader than national standard, which creates for an illusion of greater anonymity and worse transparency. The mentioned changes initiated by globalization could in case of superficial perception be an acceptable reason for satisfaction with the given „status quo“, because the allmighty market will anyway find solutions for satisfying the demand and it is not important where do we get the necessary goods from. The growing disproportion between the constantly growing population curve and the sources of limited food production forces us to answer the question about maintaining the current state of political, economical, military relations in the world. The latest development in the world proves that making sure about permanent guarantees military or non-military conflict crisis situations we have to start from the principle that food security of the state is represented by maintaining production sources and output at

in this field is possible, but just until the first crisis situation. An example for this can be the limited export of rice from the south Asian countries or the sale of natural gas from Russia to Europe not before satisfying the higher local demand. In suchlike situations all commitments of the country towards the partner are met just in intentions of useless capacities and sources, which are not needed for the stabilization of relations in their own territory. Unless we see the developments on Earth as a constantly changing process it is necessary to think strategically and ask what we are able to do in case of collapse of all these relations for providing the citizens' needs at national level with the sources that Slovakia despite the turbulences has available. What is the situation of the Slovak agriculture, which is the primary basis of food security regarding its qualitative and quantitative parameters?!

3. FOOD SECURITY – LEFT-OVER OR PERSPECTIVE?

Food security of the state is a condition in which production, trade, transport and storage of food are provided and citizens are supplied regularly (Šimák a coll. 2005). Due to the so-called restructuralization of the industry and other changes in economical policy of SR it is especially important to focus on the expression „ensured production“. If we are to examine the potential and capacities of production of basic foods for the nutrition of the population of SR in case of real failure of external food supplies in some the level of about 90% of estimated real consumption of basic commodities of local agricultural production (Grznár 2004). Before we analyze the ability of Slovak agriculture to



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Year	Area of land- used agricultural soil (ha)	Area of land - arable land (ha)	Area of land - permanent crops (ha)	Area of land - meadows and pastures (ha)	Used arable land - fallow land (%)
2001	2 254 801	1 409 222	28 934	783 905	0,25
2010	1 921 961	1 354 436	22 092	513 029	2,51
Decrease of land in ha	332 840	54 786	6 842	270 876	-
Increase of land in %	-	-	-	-	2,26

meet this quantitative parameter, let us focus on the development of agricultural land resources, which sufficiently give proof about the critical situation in the field directly participating in production capacity of the Slovak agriculture. In times when many countries use literally every centimetre of agricultural land and strictly punish its other than agricultural usage, in Slovakia 270 876 ha

of meadows and pastures have vanished in 2001 – 2010 as Chart 1 shows. Even though it is not the only factor affecting the development in beef production, it foretells the decline of production in the field of livestock production. The Chart makes it clear that the tensions in agricultural fund to grow, which consequently shows in further indicators of food security of SR.

Chart. 1 Land use in SR (2001 - 2010)

Source: Slovstat, all other charts using this source and author’s calculations

Giving up the most creditworthy Slovak soil in favour of building industrial parks „on green fields“, with the infrastructure built from the money of tax payers for foreign investors is rather one of the forms of sophisticated tool for corrupt activities and consequent private benefits of politicians than a strategic solution for the development of economy and employment. However, Slovak

agriculture crisis has a considerably deeper dimension than the reprehensible reclassifying of agricultural land to other, usually non-production categories. The wounds agriculture has suffered approximately two decades ago were so serious for this sensitive organism that in this agony it cannot use even the original fund it had available and other capacities. Slovak agricultural commodities under

significantly inconvenient grant and expense conditions of the transformation process cannot promote themselves regarding the prices on the domestic nor European market.

Consequently the agricultural production declines in almost all commodities mentioned in Chart 2.

Chart. 2 Livestock numbers by 31.12.

Year	Cattle total	Pigs total	Poultry total
1970	1 330 091	2 106 575	13 196 302
1980	1 502 809	2 788 124	15 810 863
1990	1 563 070	2 520 524	16 477 763
2000	646 148	1 488 441	13 580 042
2010	467 125	687 260	12 991 916
Decline of the state between the year with the highest production and year 2010 in numbers	1 095 945	1 833 264	3 485 847

With the decrease of breeding the rise of prices is caused by the principle of offer and demand, which then reflects in decrease of consumption, not just of pork, which could be even a positive effect of this economic misery regarding healthy food, but also of commodities that should have higher consumption rates due to their positive effect on the nutrition of population. It is mainly beef, milk and dairy products consumption. The course of consumption of selected commodities is shown in Chart 3, which presents a radical decline of consumption since 1990 until now. Also in this case we can mention the fact that the lack of local production can anytime be replaced by import, which is a common practice in the global environment. On the contrary, this helps Slovakia to break away from less lucrative sectors, to concentrate power and means for more sophisticated production and this

contribute to building the so-called knowledge society. Does it have sense to talk about the necessities of maintaining the needed production capacity in agriculture at all? If we can import these commodities under more convenient conditions from countries with well-financed production what can we get from purchase of domestic resources?! If we unlike the politicians have the ability to think strategically in a long-term horizon and do not suffer from the „blind kitties“ syndrome staggering in a strategic interval of maximum four years of administration then it definitely has sense.

4. DOMESTIC FOOD AND CONSUMPTION RATIO

It is an obligation of visionaries and strategists of the society to draw attention to threats and risks which can arise in future and significantly affect economic processes and the security of the state.

Chart. 3 Consumption of selected types of food per 1 citizen in kg

Year	Beef	Pork	Poultry	Milk and dairy products total	Cereals of the value of grain total	Potatoes
1990	21,8	44,5	15,2	226,3	158,6	85,8
2000	9,1	33,1	17,1	160,2	132,7	68,1
2010	4,2	31,6	19,1	163,1	108,6	47,6
Difference in the time of monitoring in %	80,7	29,0	25,7	27,9	32,0	45,0

These threats can originate from the extremes of weather as a result of climate changes, which can cause energy crises we have already witnessed due to long-term cold weather, such as last winter. This course of events may lead to the lack of cereals on the European market, which along with floods, droughts and other extreme weather changes may cause failure of trade with this commodity. We can and must also think about mass deaths of livestock in countries with import policy, the so-called industrially developed countries of the world. Unfortunately, we have to think not just about asymmetric, but also military conflicts of the continental or global character, as claimed by the classic that the world is closer to war when it is being reassured about peace. In the same dimensions within defence planning first we have to decide on the food security concept not just from the perspective of sensibility as the guarantee for existential needs of the population, but also because of the low flexibility regarding the changed security conditions. Unlike the industrial sectors, adapting agriculture to crisis management requirements is not a question of hours or

days, but at least months and years. It is clear that such space for reaction to acute threats cannot be created by any crisis situation. Let us now use an example of one commodity and using the previous charts present the readiness of Slovak Republic regarding suchlike situations. The dependence on massive import is not just the problem of wrong business balance of the state, but it as well shows the level of strategic planning in the development of agriculture. Chart 4. Shows the extent to which the principle of food security according to Grznár corresponds with reality. If it was necessary to provide the population with domestic sources even in case of total liquidation of breeding pigs i.e. without preserving piglets and animals intended for reproduction (of the basic herd) Slovakia is able to provide just about 32% of the current consumption. It gets even worse if we consider preserving the basic herd. The share of national production to annual consumption represents almost the opposite of limits set for food security in the given year. It is as well dramatic with food security regarding other crucial commodities produced by Slovak agriculture.

Chart. 4 Example of contradiction between theory and practice of food security regarding selected commodity (pork) in 2010

Year	Average live weight of slaughter pigs (kg)	Average utility weight of slaughter pigs when slaughtered (kg)	Annual domestic production per 1 citizen in kg (with no regard to 30% reproduction)	Annual domestic production per 1 citizen in kg (with 30% reproduction)	Current consumption in the given year in kg	Current limit of food security in kg of domestic production
2010	110	80	10	6,7	31,6	28,4
<p>In the conditions of relative openness of the market we start from the principle that food security consists of maintaining production sources and amount of production at the level of cca 90% of the estimated real consumption of basic commodities of domestic agricultural production (Grznár 2004).</p>						

5. FOOD SECURITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF THE ARMED FORCES

As it can be illustrated with the examples from the history of military conflicts in the distant or not so distant history, logistic support and providing resources for conducting military campaigns are more crucial for the final success of military operations than technical, technological or quantitative and qualitative advantage over the enemy. Inconsistency in cumulating resources for leading war or quantitatively and qualitatively insufficiently dimensioned material flows was the reason for failures of great and the most developed armies of the world, such as the French army of emperor Napoleon or the German army in both world wars, or the failure of the USA in the Asian battlefields in the second half of the 20th century. Catering of armies during armed conflict primarily affects the morale and thus also effectiveness of the military operations.

The basic precondition for an adequate level of catering in field conditions is enough resources for hot foods, or the adequate nutritional value of the meals served to soldiers in form of cold food. The precondition for this is the sufficient basis of internal (military) supplies and the ability of the supply chain of the distribution logistics to provide it on the national or global market. If we ignore the various political proclamations and reassurances about guaranteeing national security based on participating in the principles of collective safety and if we can view the eventual crises as accidental, unpredictable phenomena, we have to consider all possible risks connected to failures of these guarantees. All guarantees are limited by the ability to identify risks and estimated reasons for changes in the security situation. Activation when planning collective defence from the threats, or the threat that could with its intensity significantly overcome the estimated parameters means accepting the necessary countermeasures, which had not been part of any crisis plan. That means that



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the community or individual countries have to reconsider their priorities regarding the usage of tools necessary for minimizing the impacts of crisis, primarily the protection of national and then also collective interests.

In this context it is necessary that every member state of any political, economic or military community besides the strategy of collective security has also the concept of national defence, which determines the principles of individual security guarantee in certain areas. It is an alternative, not just in case of failures of contract commitments at political level, whose relativity has been proved throughout history several times not just in the field of military support. Similar change of priorities can be expected in crises caused by the lack of energy resources and of course also of food in regional or global criterion. We can talk about fatal consequences for the North American and European market with beef in case of radical decline of cattle numbers in the countries of Central and South America. We must openly state that in comparison to the situation prior to 1989 when the Slovak agriculture met the demands of the citizens completely, now the situation is absolutely different. If we want to say what impact the responsiveness of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic has on the food security of the state represented in Chart 4 on example of beef, we have to state relevant data of standardized consumption of this commodity according to the internal norms of the armed forces. The relevant

standard¹ represents the weight of pork included in the daily relevance of food for individual rations, which are divided according to the type of state service and military specialization, as can be seen in Chart 5. Apart from the conserved rations of pork kept at individual levels of supplies in the armed forces totally of 30 DD (daily dose), fresh meat except handy storages for storing food for immediate processing of fresh meat (up to 48 hours), the armed forces are forced to refresh supplies especially from external sources since the first day of preparing hot food during military operations.

When evaluating supply capacities it is necessary to consider the fact that if the current pork production of national resources represents 6,7 or 10 kg of meat from the 31,6 kg annual consumption per citizen, we can deduce that the out-of-Slovakia supplies of 23,9 or 21,6 kg can be considered very risky in case of a big military conflict. This threat can have form of a conflict in the region of the supplier, but the conflict may also radically restrict or eliminate the import of food commodities and any goods in general.

If we need to express the level of providing of the armed forces with pork, which according to the availability seems the least risky then the armed forces have supplies for 77 or 115 days of conducting military operations. Reflected to the daily ration it

¹ Service regulation of the Office of the state service of professional soldiers No. 34/2010 on providing rations and transport

would be just 0,018 or 0,027 kg in comparison to the standard of 0,089kg. Of course, this is the case if we do not restrict the consumption of civilians in favor of the armed forces.

Chart. 5 Recommended amount of pork in the armed forces

No.	Type of food	ration			
		1	2	3	4
		(in kilograms)			
1.	Pork	0,069	0,073	0,103	0,103
Average recommended amount per soldier/day		0,087			

CONCLUSION

The author of the article analyzed the course of the Slovak agriculture and focused on the land as a good, which has in the global economic dimensions lost its privileged position of the food base guarantee not just in the common conditions of the market, but also in cases of threats. He highlights the fact that it is not just the guarantee of maintaining sources for food supplies in case foreign supplies fail, but food security is very important for the prevention of internal destabilization caused by external and internal military and non-military threats. The current state of food security of the Slovak Republic does not just affect negatively several important macroeconomical and social indicators as trade deficit, unemployment, or microeconomic parameters in form of inconvenient type of consumed food, its quality, price and other well-known facts, but in fact, it is a hidden lie threatening the existence of the state. A charge activated by flightiness and incompetence when evaluating food dependence, based on the analysis of possible current open food market with no regard to the perspective of threats and

consequent risks. This analysis directed to the existence aspects of food security should be a stimulus for more complex and more detailed work with this issues and accepting measures representing a qualitative shift in this field in form of processing these measures into security, defence strategy of the Slovak Republic as well as resulting legislative and internal legal norms.

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