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# NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THREATS

**ABSTRACT:** The catalogue of threats which currently exist in the national security environment and may occur in the future is constantly growing. These phenomena are characterized by diversity, intensity, as well as unpredictability of the scale and consequences of their occurrence. The diversity of threats results from the fact that they are a consequence of mutually interacting political, military, economic and social, demographic and environmental processes and phenomena. Their character causes that they increasingly often lead to the occurrence of a crisis situation, and thus to the disruption of the normal functioning of the state. The article attempts to analyze the specific determinants of national security.

**KEYWORDS:** strategy, system, process, threat sources, internal security.

**INTRODUCTION**

The processes taking place in Europe and in the world, particularly in recent years, are leading to a situation in which there are social-political, economic and military transformations with difficult-to-predict consequences[1]. The definition of security is one of the most widely used concepts in everyday life, the organization and functioning of social and state life and in science. This universality gives rise to its ambiguity, which is why nowadays adjectives (e.g. personal, public, energy, national etc.) are added to precisely define the

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[1] Z. Ciekanowski, J. Nowicka, H. Wyrębek, Bezpieczeństwo państwa w obliczu współczesnych zagrożeń, Siedlce 2017, s. 9.

dimensions of security[2]. The etymology of the word security can be found in Latin, where security - securitas - consists of two elements: sine (without) and cura (concern, fear, worry), which we interpret as the absence of worry. In ancient Roman times, it meant political stability. Contemporary lexical definitions treat security as a state of certainty, peace, safety, lack of threat and also protection against it.

Security is also defined as a state (i.e. the achieved feeling of safety of a given subject), but also as a process (ensuring the feeling of safety of a subject). Stanisław Koziej believes that the second approach is more practical, as it reflects the dynamic and natural character of the security phenomenon. In this sense, the security of a given subject is this area of its activity, the content of which is to ensure the possibility of survival (existence) and freedom to pursue one's own interests in a dangerous environment. In particular, by exploiting opportunities (favourable circumstances), facing challenges, reducing risks, and countering (preventing and addressing) threats of all kinds to the actors and their interests[3].

In turn, Aleksandra Skrabacz[4] states that the concept of security can be understood as:

a. state of being free from danger, calmness, certainty,

b. state which gives a feeling of certainty and a guarantee of its preservation and a chance for improvement,

c. certainty and absence of physical danger or protection against it,

d. reasonable standard of living,

e. primary need of human beings and social groups,

f. basic need of states and international systems,

g. continuous social process whereby actors seek to adapt mechanisms that provide them with a sense of security,

h. both a state and a process, but is not characterized by invariability over long periods of time, because it depends on the mobility of the balance of power.

Then the author presents the definition of security - it is the primary, existential and supreme value and need of every human being, conditioning the survival and development of

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[2] R. Jakubczyk, Obrona Narodowa w tworzeniu III RP, Warszawa 2003, s. 58-59.
[3] S. Koziej, Polityczno-strategiczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa, „Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe", II -2011/18, , Warszawa 2011, s. 20.
[4] A. Skrabacz, Bezpieczeństwo społeczne. Podstawy teoretyczne i praktyczne, Warszawa 2012, s. 25.

individuals and social groups. In order to strengthen the sense of security, people unite and establish the state as the most important organizational form, which guarantees security[5].

According to R. Zięba security can be defined as certainty of existence and survival, state of possession and functioning and development of an entity. Security results not only from the absence of threats (their non-existence or elimination), but also arises as a result of creative activity of a given entity and is changeable in time, i.e. it has the nature of a social process[6].

Professor R. Zięba also states that security in the general social sense includes security of needs: existence, survival, stability, certainty, identity or identity, protection of the level and quality of life, and independence. Lack of security can cause anxiety and a feeling of threat.

Security also concerns the emotional zone. Its nature can be personal or social if it concerns a collective sense of security. Although subjective factors do not determine the actual state of security, they play an important role in its formation[7].

At the same time, security is understood as a process in which the state of security and its organisation are subject to dynamic change in line with natural changes in security conditions. There is therefore no such thing as permanent, guaranteed security. In other words, security as a process means the continuous activity of individuals, local communities, states and international organisations in creating the desired state of security. Ensuring the security of the state and its citizens is a vital national interest[8].

It is reasonable to distinguish two aspects of security: internal and external. Internal security means the stability and harmony of an organism or system, whereas external security means the absence of threat from other entities. Together these two aspects comprise the overall security of an entity.

Theoretical analyses of security distinguish several main security concepts (dimensions):

a. subjective, when we ask about someone's certainty of existence and survival, i.e. we ask about the security of participants in international relations,

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[5] Tamże, s. 26.

[6] R. Zięba, Bezpieczeństw o w polityce zagranicznej RP rządu koalicji Platformy Obywatelskiej i Polskiego Stronnictwa Ludowego, „Stosunki Międzynarodowe", nr 1/2013, s. 10.

[7] J. Nowicka, H. Elak, Z. Ciekanowski, Bezpieczeństwo jako kategoria funkcjonowania państwa, [w:] Z. Ciekanowski (red.), Współczesne zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa państwa, cz. II, Biała Podlaska 2021, s. 159.

[8] L. Elak, Potencjał wojsk lądowych wobec współczesnych wyzwań bezpieczeństwa Rzeczypospolitej polskiej, Warszawa 2020, s. 9.

b. the objective, when we ask about the content of security, the means and ways of shaping the certainty of possession (including identity) of the participants in international relations and their development opportunities (freedoms),

c. functional (processual), which allows us to observe the changeability in time, and thus the dynamics and evolution of subjective and objective aspects of security of international relations participants, i.e. the certainty of their existence (survival), their state of possession and opportunities (development freedoms) [9].

Krzysztof Głowiński and Stanisław Krysiński present similar approaches to security. They also state that on the basis of the subject criterion one can distinguish:

a. national security, which is an individual category and refers to individual states and their societies and nations,

b. international security, which is a term usually used to characterise the security of a specific group of states.

According to the subject criterion, different types of security are distinguished, such as[10]:

1. political security,

2. military security,

3. economic security (divided into: raw materials, energy, food, social, financial, technological, etc.),

4. humanitarian security,

5. environmental security,

6. ideological security.

The subject approach is complemented by the analysis of international security based on the spatial criterion. On its basis one can distinguish:

1. local security;

2. sub-regional security

3. regional security

4. trans-regional (zonal) security

5. global security (worldwide, universal)[11].

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[9] R. Zięba, Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie, Warszawa 2008, s. 16.

[10] K. Głowiński, S. Krysiński, Uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa globalnego i regionalnego, [w:] T. Bąk, Z. Ciekanowski, L. Szot (red.), Dylematy bezpieczeństwa człowieka, Jarosław 2013, s. 33.

[11] Tamże, s. 33.

Krzysztof Głowiński notes that the notion of safety is subject to many classifications, but the most common division is the one into: state safety, national safety, internal safety and public safety. The police lexicon defines the above terms as follows: state security is: , "the actual state of internal stability and sovereignty of the state reflecting the absence or presence of any threats in the sense of satisfying the basic existential and behavioural needs of society and treating the state as a sovereign entity in international relations". In turn, national security is: , "an assessment of the degree of satisfaction of basic human needs such as the needs for existence, identity, prosperity is the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats"[12].

Internal security is defined as: , "the actual state of internal stability, which reflects the absence or presence of any threats to the normal functioning of state organs and the citizens' way of life protected by the state". Krzysztof Głowiński understands as internal security all issues connected with the stability of internal structures. In relation to the internal security of the state an important role is played by entities carrying out tasks in this scope. These entities are often referred to as "special services", and their activity differs from the activity of other entities carrying out tasks in the field of security and public order protection[13].

Then Głowiński explains the last term connected with security, which is public security. It is understood as: , "the totality of conditions and institutions protecting life, health and property of citizens and national property, the system and sovereignty of the state from phenomena threatening the legal order". Public security is also understood as: the state of absence of danger to the functioning of the state organisation and the realisation of its interests, and this state enables normal, free development. Appropriate legal norms and institutional bodies provide guarantees for maintaining this state. The concept of public safety includes the safety of all citizens in the broadest sense of the term, and equally includes the safety of every individual, e.g. life, health, property, but also as the safety of all forms of collective life and state organisation, i.e. social and private organisations and all public institutions[14].

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[12] K. Głowiński, Bezpieczeństwo społeczności regionalnych i lokalnych, [w:] Determinanty bezpieczeństwa człowieka a rozwój regionalny, Red. T. Bąk, Z. Ciekanowski, L. Szot, Jarosław 2013, s. 220-221.
[13] A. Misiuk, Administracja porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego. Zagadnienia prawno-ustrojowe, Warszawa 2008, s. 109.
[14] W. Pływaczewski, G. Kędzierska, Leksykon policyjny, Szczytno 2001, s. 59.

Security is an extremely broad concept, and the need for it arises at birth and accompanies us throughout our lives. It does not matter the state, or the degree or direction of activity. With the progress of mankind, security, due to its nature and social importance, has become an increasingly complex problem.

Maintaining security is one of the basic functions of any country. Uncertainty is a defining feature of security policy because the intentions and capabilities of non-state adversaries often remain unknown[15]. The security of a state (also called national security) includes the problem of opposing all threats to its existence and development, both external and internal. It is conditioned by the evolution and functioning of the international environment, in which various threats and challenges arise, and is also conditioned by the security needs within the structure of society.  Taking into account the fact that security, as it is commonly understood, is directly related to external threats, significant importance is attached to the foreign policy of the country, and all undertakings are aimed at protecting its sovereignty.

The basic values that make up security are:
a.  survival (state, ethnic, biological),
b.  territorial integrity,
   a.  political independence (in terms of system, self-government, civil liberties, etc.),
c.  quality of life (adequate standard of living, civil rights and freedoms, cultural development, sound environment, etc.) [16].

The previously mentioned determinants of state security are divided into internal and external. The interaction of all factors is important to ensure an optimal level of security for a given country. The external factors on which Poland's security level depends include first of all relations with neighboring countries and Poland's position and membership of Euro-Atlantic structures. In the era of prevailing conditions in the area of politics, economics, armament and civilization, the legislative and legal status unified for the European structures is also crucial, as it contributes to ensuring security. Analyzing the internal conditions of the state's security, the political sphere, which implements the assumptions in the socio-economic sector, seems to be the key.

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[15] L. Elak, Komponent cywilno – wojskowy w operacjach reagowania kryzysowego, Warszawa 2011, s. 68.

[16] W Łepkowski (red.), Słownik terminów z zakresu  bezpieczeństwa narodowego, Warszawa 2009, s. 16.

## SOURCES OF THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

It is impossible to completely eliminate situations that create threats. Threats with the development of civilization are evolving all the time[17]. In order to be able to effectively analyse the issue of security threats it is first worth defining what a threat is. In the literature on the subject one can find various terms that refer to this concept. One of the definitions of danger can be referred to difficult situations, according to which danger takes place when "in a person there arises a fear of losing highly valued values with one's own life in the first place" . Therefore, a threat can be understood as[18]:

a. threat of harm,

b. dangerous situation which may lead to harm,

c. potential conditions which, when activated in a sequence of events, may lead to loss,

d. situation which may lead to injury or loss of health,

e. the source of the hazard,

f. source of the possible injury or loss of health,

g. hazards.

Hazards can also be defined as a conscious or mental state in which the perception of phenomena is assessed subjectively as dangerous or unfavourable. They are also perceived objectively causing states of uncertainty and fear. Marian Cieślarczyk rightly defines threats as "unfavourable and dangerous for vital interests and basic values of a given entity (individual or collective) actions of other participants of social life"[19].

Sources of threats to security are diverse and subject to evolution following changes in the interests of states playing an important role in the international arena and the development of international relations[20].

The following sources of threats can be distinguished:

a. natural disasters,

b. destabilisation of the ecological system,

c. energy, food and strategic supply crises,

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[17] Z. Ciekanowski, Rodzaje i źródła zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa, „Bezpieczeństwo i Technika Pożarnicza", 2010, nr 1, s. 28.

[18] B. Bonisławska, Współczesne zagrożenia dla bezpieczeństwa publicznego, „Zeszyty Naukowe WSEI seria: Administracja", Nr 1/2012, s. 116.

[19] M. Cieślarczyk, Niektóre psychospołeczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa, wyzwań, szans i zagrożeń, „Zeszyty Naukowe AON", Nr 2/1999, s. 233.

[20] M. Depczyński, L. Elak, Rosyjska sztuka operacyjna w zarysie, Warszawa 2020, s. 395 - 399.

d.  economic crises,

e.  demography and health system,

f.  migration and integration,

g.  political and social system crisis,

h.  internal security system crisis.

We can distinguish between a number of threat and counter-threat scenarios in each of the areas that may be at risk.

Among the eight factors listed as requiring monitoring and likely to lead to conflict situations are:

a.  state of the nation,

b.  rule of law,

c.  respect for fundamental rights,

d.  civil society and the media,

e.  community relations and dispute resolution mechanism,

f.  economic governance,

g.  social and regional inequalities,

h.  geopolitical situation[21].

Also a serious security threat is increasingly posed by terrorist groups, sabotage, disruption of vital raw material supplies or serious environmental threats. In addition, there is also the threat from foreign secret services. On an international scale, the threat of organised crime and terrorist attacks is growing. Although Poland is geographically distant from the main sources of threats, it does not give us a guarantee of safety, as our country participates in stabilisation activities in various places around the world. The territory of Poland, due to its accessibility and geographical location, may be a convenient place to undertake and prepare actions aimed at institutions and companies as well as citizens of other countries.

Nowadays, threats change their nature and the related security challenges. Some threats are disappearing, others persist or emerge with increased force. The list of threats and the priorities associated with them vary depending on location, population and culture. Poland's membership in the North Atlantic Alliance reduces the threat of aggression to our country, primarily by multiplying the deterrence factor.

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[21] K. Głowiński, S. Krysiński, Uwarunkowania..., dz. cyt., s. 34.

Disputes and conflicts are increasingly often resolved by negotiation or consensus, and potential aggression is countered by diplomatic means. However, the reduction of the threat of war on a continental or global scale is accompanied by an increase in local crises, which develop into regional or local conflicts. Their sources are diverse: religious conflicts, ethnic feuds, human rights violations, border disputes, shortages of basic means of existence, natural disasters, weakening or disintegration of state structures, economic and civilisational collapse, or even epidemics.

Contemporary threats related to the political sphere are a multidimensional problem constituting, especially today, a new quality due to the current conditions of the system. Both the sources and types of contemporary political threats are diverse - apart from the old and well-known ones, new ones keep appearing, resulting from progress in many spheres of human activity - not only political. The political sphere is only one of the spheres of activity. Nevertheless, political threats themselves can be divided into two categories: internal threats - which originate within a given political structure, and external threats - which come from outside and have a destabilising effect on individual political actors. Essential political threats are problems that have a decisive impact on the stability of the political sphere, both internal and external. They constitute the main problems of the contemporary world, which must be solved if we want to maintain political stability as well as social[22].

The main political threats of an internal character have their source inside a given political structure, exerting a destabilising influence on it without spreading outside, although, as I have already mentioned, the borders are ambiguous and quite conventional so that internal factors having a negative influence on a given political sphere may spread outside - destabilising the political situation in the closer or further neighbourhood, region, or, in exceptional cases, have a much wider range.

The political instability and economic and social problems of the state can be explained to a large extent by the lack of appropriate ethical foundations of people representing institutions endowed with public trust. Pathologies occurring in the public sphere have an impact on the disintegration of social ties, a decrease in trust in the state and democratic institutions. They destroy the free market, deepen poverty and social inequalities, and have a negative impact on consumption and investment.

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[22] C. Rutkowski, Sieć bezpieczeństwa, Warszawa 2009, s. 49.

Political threats fall under both international and internal security. Progressive globalism forces us to see these phenomena in interdependent and multifaceted relationships. They can lead to the overthrow of legitimate authorities, the violation of the raison d'état or the undermining of the state's position on the international arena. Political threats are also generated by insufficient international cooperation , mistrust and a confrontational attitude[23].

## INTERACTION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM ENTITIES

The activity of the entities of the system is a combination of undertakings aimed at protecting people, property, environment against natural and man-made threats. This activity is carried out by civil authorities, however, when necessary it is possible to be supported by the armed forces. The objectives of the system security entities measures will coincide with those that define the functioning of the civil protection system. Thus, they should include[24]:

a. protection of people, goods and the environment against the effects of natural disasters, technical failures and other hazards and dangers caused by natural or man-made forces,

b. overcoming the consequences of threats,

c. ensuring the conditions necessary for survival.

In order to properly fulfill the presented objectives, the system entities perform the following tasks:

a. planning and organising activities,

b. risk monitoring,

c. warning and alarm,

d. rescue of people, animals, property,

e. evacuation,

f. fighting fires, floods and other hazards,

g. providing shelter and supplies to the injured,

h. ad hoc restoration of public services,

i. decontamination, elimination of contamination and infection,

j. emergency burial of the dead.

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[23] J. Nowicka, Działania profilaktyczne na rzecz bezpieczeństwa, [w:] Z. Ciekanowski (red.), Państwo wobec zagrożeń, Biała Podlaska 2020, s. 106.
[24] W. Kitler, Obrona cywilna (nie militarna) w obronie narodowej III RP, Warszawa 2002, s. 114.

The system is organised in such a way that it fulfils the conditions of permanent functioning in this stage called permanent state of vigilance and ad hoc response . At this stage an important element of functioning of the entities is a proper monitoring of threats, i.e. prevention and counteraction of possible threats[25].

The second stage of functioning of the entities of the system is crisis management. This is the stage of reacting after the occurrence of threats whose type and range led to a situation of a political and military crisis in the surroundings of the aggression against a given state, but may pose an indirect threat. In the environment of Poland, a political and military crisis in terms of a threat to the security of our state may develop on two levels, i.e:

a.  potential danger of nationality and territorial conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe,

b.  disputes and territorial claims and conflicts concerning national minorities.

Non-military threats, and among them the most dangerous threat to the security of the state, i.e. a threat to the constitutional system, are unlikely in the conditions of Polish reality. We are not religious fanatics, and in the country there are no political parties or groupings that count and adhere to extreme ideologies[26].

Art.2 of the Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management explains what crisis management is. Crisis management is the activity of public administration bodies being the element of national security management, which consists in prevention of crisis situations, preparation to take control over them by means of planned activities, reaction in case of crisis situations, removal of their effects and restoration of resources and critical infrastructure.

In order to ensure proper and effective cooperation of the system's entities, appropriate documents, legal basis, defining the tasks of individual entities, their organisation in crisis situations, as well as the principles and scope of cooperation were necessary.

The basic strategic documents concerning (the state of) state security are:

a.  The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, (Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland) of 2 April 1997.

b.  The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland of 12 May 2020.

c.  The Act of 21 November 1967 on the Universal Duty to Defend the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws 2019.1541).

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[25]W. Kitler, A. Skrabacz, Wojskowe wsparcie władz cywilnych i społeczeństwa – Materiały z seminarium przeprowadzonego w dniu 9.04.2003 r. na Wydziale Strategiczno-Obronnym. Warszawa 2003, s. 22.

[26] T. Bąk, Z. Ciekanowski, Teorie bezpieczeństwa…, dz. cyt., s. 78.

d.   The Act of 21 June 2013 on amending the Act on the office of the Minister of National Defence and certain other acts ((Journal of Laws 2013, item 189).

e.   Act on the state of natural disaster of 18 April 2002, (Journal of Laws 2002 No. 62 item 558).

f.   Act on the state of emergency of 21 June 2002, (Journal of Laws 2017.0.1928).

g.   The Act of 30 August 2011 on amending the Act on martial law and on the competences of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the principles of his subordination to the constitutional bodies of the Republic of Poland and some other acts (Dz.U.2011.222.1323).

h.   Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management (Dz.U.2020.1856).

i.   Regulation of the Council of Ministers on the manner of creation of the communal response team, poviat and voivodship crisis response team and the Government Crisis Coordination Team and their functioning of 3 December 2002, Dz. 2002.No.215, item 1818).

j.   Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 12 February 2018 amending the regulation on the preparation of the national security management system (Journal of Laws 2018, item 474).

k.   The Police Act of 6 April 1990( Journal of Laws 2014.1199).

l.   The 2013 White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland.

m.  Strategic Concept of Maritime Security of the Republic of Poland of 10.02.2017.

n.   Doctrine of Cyber Security of the Republic of Poland of 22.01.2020.


**CONCLUSIONS**

National security is the highest good, one could say, especially in modern times, full of terrorist actions as well as technical failures and permanent natural disasters. The main decision-makers should not forget about the basic function of the state, which is to ensure the security of citizens. Successive governments change and will continue to change, but we can never avoid crises, but we can fight them effectively. We have the right tools in the form of, for example, laws and regulations, and we can carry out our tasks in the field of emergency response in the right way.

The factors which generate new threats of a different nature are changes in international relations and also civilisational changes, such as population growth and the rate of

urbanisation, or changes in the natural environment. It should be noted, however, that non-military threats pose the greatest challenge to global security. This thesis is supported primarily by the number, frequency of occurrence and range of impact of such threats. This does not mean, however, that military threats should be disregarded, as they must constantly be in the area of interest of states and security organizations. Therefore, the system of global, regional or national security in the 21st century should be perceived comprehensively. This is why it should be integrated, and thus combine and consolidate various security actors and areas of activity into an internally coherent whole. Thanks to the synergy effect achieved in this way, greater effectiveness of counteracting and fighting various threats, both military and non-military, will be ensured[27].

Nowadays a growing number of non-military threats appear in the security environment and their significance and impact is much greater than in the past. Therefore, in addition to the political-military level of security threats, nowadays we also take into account issues that are related to threats of economic, political, scientific and technical, ideological, cultural, humanitarian, ecological or social nature. The assessment of the contemporary security environment and the analyses made have contributed to the creation of three possible scenarios for the formation of strategic security conditions in the next twenty years.

The first scenario, the so-called integration scenario, assumes the predominance of positive and desirable phenomena and trends, which will influence the successive strengthening of the current system of international security.

The second is disintegrative in nature, as it predicts the predominance of unfavourable and dangerous external and internal processes, which will contribute to the gradual degradation or even disintegration of the current security system. However, the evolutionary scenario is considered the most likely.

According to it in the future there will be a tendency for a relative balance of positive and negative phenomena. The forecast assumes that the relative instability of international security, which persists today, will continue for an extended period of time, during which there will be irregular outbreaks of crises, as well as attempts to contain them on an ad hoc basis .

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[27] Z. Polcikiewicza, P., Siemiątkowskiego, P. Tomaszewskiego (red.), Współczesne wyzwania polityki bezpieczeństwa, Toruń 2019, s. 45-46.

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