

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO THE STATE'S EXTERNAL SECURITY

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Abstract. *Security is one of the most fundamental values and a precondition for the stable development of individuals, societies, and states. This article examines the catalog of contemporary threats to the external security of the state and clarifies the scope and objectives of security as an analytical category. It distinguishes between internal and external, national and international security, and reviews the principal scholarly approaches to defining national security, drawing on the Polish and international literature. Particular attention is devoted to the institutional dimension of security – the role of state bodies, local government, and non-governmental actors acting within a single, coherent national security system – and to the transformation of the threat environment from predominantly military threats toward hybrid, informational, cyber, financial, and social ones. The study argues that, alongside institutional capacity, security education and public awareness function as a “safety valve” that mitigates the effects of contemporary threats, and that no state can sustain lasting security without international cooperation.*

Keywords: external security; internal security; national security; international security; security threats; hybrid threats; security education.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the catalog of contemporary threats to state security. Considerable attention is paid to the scope and objectives of security, as well as the actions of entities responsible for ensuring the desired level of security, both for the state itself and for various aspects of society's functioning. Furthermore, the importance of an adequate level of security is emphasized, not only for the proper functioning of the state and its institutions, but also for society as a whole. Security has long been perceived as a fundamental existential foundation and one of the most cherished values, both in the social and individual dimensions. Ensuring an acceptable level of state security is an indispensable condition for the harmonious and effective development of society, individuals, individual institutions, and the efficient organization of the entire state. The subject of security is analyzed broadly, and the desire to understand and study it is an extremely complex and multifaceted task. Therefore, attempts to comprehensively address this fundamental, existential phenomenon may prove problematic.

2. CONDITIONS OF THE STATE'S EXTERNAL SECURITY

Understanding the specific nature of security as a key value and a foundation for creating a catalog of essential human values, as well as a condition for state development, provides the basis for a deeper analysis of the scope and fundamental goals of security. Looking through the lens of its scope and goals, security is divided into internal and external security, national and international. External security can be understood as the absence of threats to the state from other entities. In terms of internal security, it

constitutes its internal stability (Berent, 1988, p. 112). This means striving to ensure state security by creating the best possible internal conditions for the development of important elements of the system, but also by eliminating potential external threats by shaping a favorable external environment that will facilitate the harmonious development of the state (Dobrosielski, 1973, p. 14). Z. Nowakowski believes that internal security is a type of state security that eliminates all threats and protects both the state itself and its citizens from them. This type of security is directly focused on building a stable and harmonious functioning of the state, while simultaneously protecting the interests of individuals and society. Building such a state is possible through effectively implemented internal state policy. Internal security primarily encompasses securing vital interests against threats resulting from the actions of organizations, institutions, and individuals operating within the state or on its territory. (Nowakowski, 2009, p. 51).

Internal security, therefore, primarily refers to the effectiveness of state and institutional actions, whose primary task is to safeguard the national interest. Initiatives undertaken by the state should encompass a comprehensive catalog of possible threats resulting from specific activities, thus posing a threat to internal security. External security, on the other hand, is a type of security whose primary goal is to secure national interests, assets, values, and, above all, quality of life free from threats originating outside the state's borders. We can distinguish the following types of threats:

- military threats, i.e. threats related to illegal trade or other illegal acts;

but also:

- espionage;
- the penetration of foreign cultural and moral patterns;
- the propagation of hate speech and the dissemination of fake news internationally.

The foundation for effective external security management can be established through recognized priorities, recognized principles of international collective security, and a sound, balanced, and effective foreign policy in its economic, social, political, and military dimensions. It should be focused on ensuring the preservation of vital national interests in the international arena. Here, the state plays a crucial role in assessing and defining the most important national interests, as well as in establishing international relations to safeguard them.

W. Kitler believes that there is considerable latitude in understanding and defining the concept of national security. This means that the concept encompasses too broadly a wide range of issues. In his opinion, such an approach is too imprecise and doomed to failure. Virtually any problem relating to any threat to individuals, society, or institutions falls within the scope of national security (Wejksznier & Wojciechowski, 2019, pp. 10–13). It follows that Kitler, similarly to Nowakowski, considers national security to encompass those elements that condition the undisturbed existence and development of the nation. Therefore, we can assume that these are values that both individuals and groups of people not only recognize as common but also pursue together. They are important for the state as a political institution, even in the presence of certain divergences in individual interests. Furthermore, W. Kitler also draws attention to another, no less important, issue: historical experience demonstrating a certain evolutionary relationship between the state and security. This interdependence demonstrates a process in which security encompasses many values that are characteristic not only of individuals but also of social groups, previously not included in the classically interpreted concept of state security.

For many years, researchers have presented various approaches to identifying essential values that should be protected by the state. The dominant view in the realist approach was that the state constructs a certain catalog of values, in which the national interest was embodied in specific postulates (Zięba, 1997, p. 9).

The list is constantly changing and serves as a barometer of the current political situation, depending on emerging threats and concerns. The two most important values are territorial integrity and political independence (Klaffkowski, 1985, p. 37).

When analyzing issues related to national security, it is important to consider significant threats to the state and society, both political and military. This approach was presented in the mid-20th century in Paris in the *Dictionnaire Diplomatique*, which interpreted the concept of *sécurité* as "a set of circumstances that prevents a state from becoming the target of an attack. Generally, the idea is to ensure that any attack against the state is ineffective." This definition of national security clearly demonstrates that potential threats originate externally, and the fundamental goal determining the actions taken by a state in a situation of direct international conflict is the survival of the nation and its organizational structure. A paradigm shifts in the perception of the role and importance of national security and its "demilitarization" began immediately after the end of World War II. The most important issue at that time was stable and dynamic development and the pursuit of improved living conditions for citizens. However, the rapid socio-political, economic, and military transformations, particularly in the context of the development of weapons of mass destruction, did not eliminate the military element from the security sphere. An attempt was made to re-examine threats. One of the researchers who advocated balancing the protection of national interests with the interests of individuals (citizens of smaller communities). During the period of socio-political transformation in Poland after 1989, the concept of national security increasingly focused on improving the quality of life, ensuring development, and ensuring prosperity.

Analyzing various approaches and determinants of national security, we conclude that the institutional dimension of the state plays a fundamental role in ensuring the protection of its citizens' lives, health, and property at all times. Society has a constitutional right to this, guaranteeing universal protection against threats resulting from natural and industrial disasters, natural disasters, and military threats. Actions to ensure national security are the responsibility of all bodies, not only the central government, but also local governments, as well as non-governmental institutions that closely cooperate with governmental and local government entities. These institutions are responsible for fulfilling and implementing constitutional guarantees in times of peace and war. Citizen assistance and involvement, depending on the values established in a given state, become a moral and natural obligation. Recognizing the potential for various threats arising from a dynamically evolving security environment, specialized institutions are established to ensure security at the state level, including forces responsible for taking specific responses and actions depending on the type of threat. In order to ensure the expected level of security, all these entities must function within a single, coherent and continuously operating system, both in peacetime and in times of threats, including armed aggression (Siuda & Zaczek-Zaczyński, 1999, p. 33). Ensuring security at the state level involves a well-functioning security system. Therefore, the state's national security system is composed of all bodies and institutions responsible for security, belonging to the legislative, executive, judicial, and local authorities (Korzeniowski, 2017).

Currently, security is broadly understood as a process influenced by factors that determine specific areas of life and functioning of individuals, as well as state institutions and authorities. Security is characterized by significant fluctuations, variability, and dynamics. This understanding of the concept of security reflects the proper functioning and appropriate actions of entities responsible for its level. Maintaining an acceptable level of national security is the result of constant monitoring and analysis of the catalog of threats characterizing the contemporary international environment. To achieve this, it is also necessary to systematically review the nature of mutual international relations. Entities responsible for ensuring and maintaining security create guidelines for specific policies and should also define the main objectives and scope of security within its individual types, building a catalog of specific guidelines that take into account key components essential for defining external, internal, national, and international security. Delineating the scope of national security is an important guarantee of defining and maintaining the *raison d'état* and guaranteeing the state's position in the international arena. Defining goals is key to conducting a proper analysis of individual security types. Each researcher analyzing a selected type of security should generate a specific list of needs/goals in a given area. Ensuring and maintaining the state of security expected and accepted by society at the state level, and thus the smooth functioning of individual units, refers to the effective operation of the state's security system and its individual security subsystems. Institutions operating within each subsystem should be assigned specific competencies in the National Security Strategy to achieve the list of security goals.

The volatility of the security environment means that the effective operation of all elements of the Polish security system is only possible through constructive cooperation. This is exemplified by the activities of the Government Security Centre, which, in the face of a crisis, implements an action plan involving individual entities from various subsystems of the national security system. Their effective cooperation, competences, and skills are crucial for neutralizing not only crisis situations but also other threats to the security of the state and society. A fundamental task in an efficiently functioning security system seems to be the continuous acquisition and monitoring of knowledge about potential threats at the state level, and their neutralization or mitigation. All entities operating within these subsystems should also be responsible for conducting extensive educational, informational, and preventive activities at the societal level. The possession of basic security knowledge by the majority of society, as well as the awareness of the possibility of practical application of this knowledge in the face of a threat, constitutes a "safety valve" that can significantly mitigate the negative effects of existing threats. Security plays an important role in international relations, constituting their foundation. Its fundamental goal is to build institutional structures and mechanisms that maintain security, peace, and stability at the desired level, thus creating conditions for development in all dimensions. No state is capable of building and maintaining lasting peace, order, and harmony in international relations on its own, without cooperation with others (Cziomer, 2010, p. 7).

Building lasting peace, order, and security today must take into account the diverse needs and goals of countries building international alliances. In today's environment, threats are growing dynamically and systematically, completely changing the nature of challenges and leading to numerous misunderstandings, dismantling, and damaging relationships between states. However, from a different perspective, there is synergy and the combining of joint efforts and actions to build and conclude agreements, arrangements, various alliances, strengthen ties, mutual assistance, and solidarity between individual countries. In the area of security, a key issue is recognition, that is, identifying the constantly evolving catalog of threats, not only in the military dimension but also in non-military or hybrid ones. Systematic analysis and analysis of the sources and factors influencing the growth of threats in the modern world are essential. Constantly examining the security environment and its types, across all dimensions, is the foundation for effectively developing concepts for countering threats and taking action to eliminate their sources and causes. Analyses based on historical sources and research into security conditions offer numerous opportunities to assess the effectiveness of methods, forms, and tools used by state bodies and institutions in the past in the fight to maintain the level of security expected by society. The fundamental goal of security efforts should be to outline and precisely define a global approach to security. Such a concept will enable us to understand the causes and effects, but also to determine the nature and types of threats, and thus the difficulties and scale of the challenges to be addressed. Conducting thorough analyses will allow us to formulate certain tenets and regularities regarding the dynamic changes taking place in the security environment, both in the context of individual states' security strategies and in broader, international, and global perspectives. This approach to understanding and acting creates conditions for a responsible approach to security issues and for more effective implementation of security-related tasks in the constantly evolving field of international relations (Lasoń, 2010, p. 9).

Since the dawn of our civilization, security issues have been considered one of the most important foundations for the peaceful coexistence of nations, states, and societies. Protecting security has meant preserving the highest and most essential values for the survival and survival of humanity. Maintaining security at an appropriate level, accepted by society, constitutes the fundamental framework for the functioning of a given state. The dynamically evolving catalog of contemporary threats in the security environment also changes the perspectives and perceptions of the conditions influencing the sense of security or its insecurity. Therefore, it is possible and justified to classify various types of security on several levels and dimensions. The substantive division of security reflects its subjective and semantic content in research and cognitive-empirical concepts. The current division widely accepted by researchers in security sciences is more an expression of a certain pragmatism and an attempt at systematization than an attempt to encompass and create a strict and comprehensive catalog that fully encompasses the subject of security. Political, social, economic, ecological, health, and financial security are merely a preliminary,

ordering classification, not a complete set. Moreover, considering the contemporary timeframe, public discourse often employs concepts related to security, such as the protection of national identity or the protection of fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms. Research is underway to develop a comprehensive, horizontal theory built on a model based on dynamically changing conditions on a global scale. The foundation of this research is the analysis and identification of threats and emerging challenges, as well as the development of a strategy and systemic approach that will create opportunities for effective security management across various scales and dimensions (Ciekanowski, 2010, p. 28).

3. CONCLUSION

The dynamic changes in the security environment, resulting from globalization and affecting every aspect of our lives and the functioning of individuals and states, are contributing to a growing number of new threats. These threats have evolved significantly in recent years, from military threats to hybrid threats. Not only individuals and society as a whole, but also state institutions are increasingly faced with threats in the areas of health, cyberspace, finance, and the broader social sphere. Emerging threats generate serious and often unpredictable negative consequences for human life and health. State action, for example, in the information and education spheres, should be a response to this constantly evolving catalog of threats. People should be equipped not only with key competencies and skills but also with theoretical knowledge in the areas of national security, rescue operations, first aid, and health. The knowledge, competencies, and skills imparted through education are intended to help them behave appropriately and respond to difficult, dangerous, and crisis events, and above all, to develop the habit of coping appropriately and effectively in situations of immediate threat to life and health. Such a systemic, well-thought-out, well-organized and implemented process of building public awareness of potential threats can contribute to more effective prevention of dangerous situations and events, increase confidence and provide guarantees that in difficult situations, citizens will be able to act to ensure their own safety and will be able to protect themselves against the negative effects of threats.

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