SECURITY OF POLAND IN THE SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION PERIOD

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Abstract. The article presents the social and political situation of Poland in the context of changes, resulting from the downfall of the so-called „Eastern bloc" after year 1989. Particular emphasis was put on the significance of the following historic events: dissolution of the Warsaw Pact; withdrawal of the Russian army from Poland; Poland becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union and the terrorist attack on World Trade Center of September 11th, 2001. In the context of these events, on the basis of source documents (assumptions, doctrines and strategies), the strategic directions of building of a state security system were presented.

Year 1989 was a breakthrough for the states of central and eastern Europe, both in terms of their security and the regional and global level security. It should be emphasized here that the early years after gaining independence resulted in many multidimensional social, political and economic changes, not only in Poland, but in the entire region of central and eastern Europe. The bloodless revolution in Poland brought a wave of social opposition against the totalitarian governments of the so-called „people's democracy" states and domination of the former Soviet Union (USSR) in this part of Europe. Aims of various nations neighboring Poland to gain independence and freedom have led to significant changes in the region of our country. The most significant one was downfall of the USSR, based on detachment of subsequent republics from Russia and emergence of politically independent states. In this way, four countries emerged along the eastern border of Poland: Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast). Our neighbors in the south also decided to build their future in two separate countries (Slovakia and Czech Republic) in the place of the former Czechoslovakia. A unified German state emerged in the West.

From the perspective of external military security of Poland, a significant event was dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 and commencement of the process of withdrawal of the Russian army from Poland[1]. This was surely a breakthrough in

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[1]   Withdrawal of the Russian army from Poland started on April 8th, 1991. On that day, a rocket unit left the garrison in Borne Sulimowo.

the perception of security of Poland in the international politics. Until that time, Poland had formally been a member of a military and political structure, dominated by the USSR (the Warsaw Pact). The situation was additionally complicated by the fact that the Russian army was staying within our territory. In this situation, authors of the *Defense Doctrine of the Republic of Poland* of year 1990 were unable to create a new vision of security of our country. Therefore, the "*Doctrine...*" largely copied the concepts of security concepts from the pre-transformation period, although it was more open to new kinds of threats[2]. It can surely be said that the unstable political and military system of the region was not favorable to searching for a permanent foundation for construction of the new defense system of the 3rd Republic of Poland.

The last Russian soldiers left Poland on September 17th, 1993. These were soldiers of auxiliary units, securing transit of the Russian army withdrawn from Germany. Earlier, on October 28th, 1992, the last combat unit left Poland (a brigade of torpedo boats from Świnoujście). It can be said that from this moment, Poland could consider itself a fully sovereign state, not bound by the political and military treaties with the former USSR, imposed upon us after the second world war. On the other hand, the position of Russia as a world power, having at its disposal the huge arsenal of nuclear weapons, was very strong internationally.

Some experts believe that the falling apart of the Warsaw Pact and changes in the geopolitical map of Europe of the early nineties of the 20th century have led to significant changes in perception of issues associated with external security of the states of the region. There was a dominant belief that the problem was rather a regional than a global one. Such changes were not favorable, since, in a sense, they left the young states without international support[3]. Carefulness of the western states in relations with the young democracies of the former "eastern bloc" resulted in a situation, in which Poland was politically alienated for several years, left without military alliances that would warrant its external security. Changes on the geopolitical map of Europe, associated with the downfall of the so-called "socialist states camp" had an enormous impact on the external and internal security of our country. The downfall of the Warsaw Pact resulted in exclusion of the Polish Armed Forces from the external military pact structures, forcing the Republic of Poland (at least temporarily) to create a defense system on its own. On the other hand, progressing democratization ensured internal stabilization of the country, at the same time enforcing a reformed perspective of the role of the armed forces in the country.

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[2] See P. Koziej, *Ewolucja polskiej strategii obronności* (in) R. Kuźniar (ed.), *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989-2000*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Scholar" Warsaw 2001, p. 458.

[3] See E.A. Kołodziej, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie: od globalizacji do regionalizacji*, (in) D. Bobrow, E. Haliżak, R. Zięba (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i międzynarodowe u schyłku XX wieku*, Warsaw 1997, p. 57-58.

Such situation must have played the role of a force determining the defense policy of our country, which was reflected in the subsequent security assumptions, doctrines and strategies. We searched for solutions, which would ensure: first of all – the internal stability of the country, and secondly – external security of an alienated state. Internal stability was to be provided thanks to thorough economic and political reforms. At the time, the state structures were reorganized, as well as its legal system, including alteration of the Constitution. Civil, democratic control of the armed forces was introduced. Specialists dealing with national security, started to see the non-military threats, such as those associated with social pathologies, accompanying the relaxation, frustration, unemployment and other phenomena, associated with socioeconomic changes[4]. In the assessment of the international political and military situation, less and less importance was being attached to the possibility of a large scale armed conflict, using mass destruction weapons. The security of our country in this period could have been influenced much more by the local conflicts in the areas neighboring Poland, associated with the downfall of the former USSR or the nationality-driven conflicts in the Balkans[5]. Such events usually result in intensified migration movements of the population, which, in turn, increases the probability of emergence of internal threats (e.g. crime rates).

The above conditions have been proven partially by the *Assumptions for the Polish security policy* of year 1992 and they were taken into account more broadly in the second document, entitled the *Security policy and defense strategy of the Republic of Poland.* Both documents were approved by the meeting of the State Defense Committee of November 2nd, 1992. It discussed the role of civil and economic structures of the state in defense activities. Issues of protection of the civil population were discussed in great detail[6]. Three pillars of the defense system of the country were established: 1) the defense management system; 2) the armed forces of the Republic of Poland; 3) non-military defense links. As we can see, apart from the military potential (the armed forces of the Republic of Poland), nonmilitary factors were taken into account in the state security policy. In this way, the present defense system of the state emerged.

This would have been a significant achievement, taking into account the situation in the country. It was a particularly significant period in reconstruction of the state structure. A total and real takeover of civil control over the army and police was taking place. However, in the army and police structures, many were skeptical about the activities of civil ministers in the area of state security. Polarization of views took place gradually, and infiltration of the police and army structures with civil managerial staff and specialists provided an opportunity of getting a broader view of the issues

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4   See *Strategie bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski po 1989 roku*, Part II „Zeszyty Akademii Dyplo-matycznej" 2004, no. 13, p. 9-33.
5   T. Szczurek, *Konflikty zbrojne*, Wydawnictwo WAT, Warsaw 2009, p. 141.
6   P. Koziej, *Ewolucja polskiej strategii...*, op. cit., p. 464-468.

of security. The non-military threats were perceived as more significant. It should be emphasized that this influenced greatly the shaping of social awareness, particularly among those responsible for crisis management in Poland. One could wonder if the „relishing" our democracy and market economy slowed down and pushed away the issue of construction of a new, efficient system of responding to external and internal threats. It is a fact that a number of organizational and legislative initiatives of the early nineties of the previous century are now being criticized as conservative and not adapted to the new challenges[7].

In the area of the broadly understood education for security and creation of defense awareness of the new, civil staff of state institutions, and in creation of the multidimensional perspective of internal and external security in the period under concern, the key role was played by scientists from military universities, mainly from the National Defense Academy. Scientific research on national (state) security and the results of this research (expert opinions, scientific publications) played a decisive role in raising of awareness of the staff dealing with these issues in the structures of the state. It is necessary to mention the academic role of these institutions. Particularly significant are the so-called Higher Defense Courses, conducted at the National Defense Academy for Parliament members, Senate representatives, ministers, provincial governors and directors (managers) of numerous state institutions. It should also be noted that the military universities, such as the Military University of Technology, opened up to civil students, which also had to increase the level of military knowledge among the representatives of the future social elite. The civil graduates of the National Defense Academy, the Military University of Technology often become members of managerial staff and experts at institutions dealing with national defense.

In the international context, despite its alienation, mentioned earlier, Poland engaged in a policy aimed at building of a collective defense system in Europe, and joint defense activities were undertaken with the neighbors[8]. States of the region, including Poland, had to take into account a number of factors characterizing the situation of the international security arena. These factors, after year 1989, included:

- – increased dependence of individual state economies on the external impacts,
- – correlation of information space,
- – increased role of international institutions in economy and politics,

7   Z. Piątek, *Wprowadzenie*, (in) Z. Piątek (ed.), *Narodowy System Pogotowia Kryzysowego*, Defense Community Movement Association, Warsaw 2007, p. 7.

8   See: J. Kukułka, *Narodziny nowych koncepcji bezpieczeństwa*, (in) J. Kukułka (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w Europie Środkowej po zimnej wojnie*, publishing house of Faculty of International Relations of Warsaw University, Warsaw 1994, p. 38.

- increasing regional and subregional integration, not only in Europe, but also in Asia, Pacific, Africa and Latin America,
- increasing national and regional extremism,
- growing political and military competition in regions,
- strong separatist tendencies, particularly in young democracies,
- emerging attempts to decrease the role of the sovereign state as the basic component of international relations,
- attempts to interfere with internal affairs of the states,
- increased threats due to cross-border organized crime groups and international terrorism[9].

In this situation, the activities of the Polish authorities aimed at integration with international organizations, which could substantially strengthen the military and economic security of the state, were fully understood and accepted by the society. Efforts were commenced to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

Poland was invited to become a NATO member in 1997, and after two years – in 1999 – it became a member with full rights. Integration with the North Atlantic Treaty structures changed the position of Poland on the international arena dramatically. A visible shift had to take place in the perception of state security to take into account the alliance standards[10]. The scope of definition of defense was broadened to include cooperation with other states of the Alliance, stabilization and crisis response not only in the country. In the subsequent strategic documents, it was necessary to take into account the *Alliance's Strategic Concept*, approved by the NATO Council in Washington during a meeting with heads of member states on April 23rd and 24th, 1999. On January 4th, 2000, less than a year after Poland's accession to NATO, the *Strategy for security of the Republic of Poland* was published, taking into account a number of factors disregarded in the previous assumptions, doctrines and strategies (of 1990 and 1992). In anti-crisis activities, apart from national activities, international cooperation was emphasized. At the same time, it was underlined that state defense was primarily an internal issue.

On the verge of the century, Poland was in a stable social, politic and economic situation, which, accompanied by membership in the greatest political and military alliance in the world (NATO), put our country among stable and safe states. Poland continued its efforts (commenced in 1994) to become a member of the European Union, and this process (subsequent fulfillment of conditions of the community) should be

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[9] Z. Nowakowski, *Bezpieczeństwo państwa w koncepcjach programowych partii parlamentarnych w Polsce po 1989 roku*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Powszechne S.A., Warsaw 2009, p. 61.

[10] More information: J.M. Nowak, *Zmiany w NATO a polski interes narodowy*, (in) R. Kuźniar, Z. Lachowski (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo Międzynarodowe czasu przemian. Zagrożenia – koncepcje – instytucje*, Polish Institute for International Affairs, Warsaw 2003, p. 393-420.

counted among those having a positive influence on creation of new opportunities for development in all areas of functioning of the country, including security.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, resulted in a serious reconsideration of the issue of security. In Poland, like in other states of the Western civilization realm, emphasis was put on new threats, mainly associated with international terrorism. The response of the international community to the event confirmed the international solidarity and will to counteract such wrongful acts together. These tendencies became even stronger after a bloody attack in the capital city of Spain. On March 11th, 2004, almost 200 people were killed, and more than 1200 thousand were injured as a result of a terrorist attack on suburban trains in Madrid. The international community waged an open war against terrorism, particularly through activities aimed at physical liquidation of terrorists and terrorist organization bases in countries that support terrorism.

Analyzing the issue of security of Europe and Poland in the period, it was necessary to take into account the statements of the leader of an international terrorist organization (Al-Qaida), Osama Bin Laden, who underlined many times the importance of armed jihad in Iraq and the necessity of war against the USA and their allies occupying the Muslim land. The statement of Osama Bin Laden, delivered about one month after the attacks in Madrid, constituted a clear offer of armistice, addressed to the European allies of the USA, participating in occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. There was only one condition: the soldiers of these states had to leave Muslim land immediately.

Poland, as a member of NATO and an ally to the United States, got engaged in the anti-terrorist coalition. Sending of armies to Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in an even greater threat to the country, posed by terrorist organizations, mainly of Muslim origin[11]. In the statements of another Muslim leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Poland was listed among countries hostile to Islam. In his message of May 20th, 2005, Zawahiri called upon his allies to attack the British, Australian, Norwegian and Polish interests all over the world. Al-Tawhid, usurping the right to represent Al-Qaida in Europe, addressed the Poles, calling them "to demand withdrawal of the Polish invading armies from Iraq; otherwise they will pay the price that the Spanish people have paid". Among other things, the message stated: "[we address] the Polish government, the Poles, and particularly the dishonorable Prime Minister, Marek Belka: withdraw your armed forces from Iraq, or you will hear explosions,

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[11]   *Zagrożenie atakami terrorystycznymi w Polsce. Raport-2006* and *Aneks do raportu 2007*, Collective work issued by the Center for Strategic Studies and Forecasts of University of International Relations in Łódź. The report was prepared by employees and coworkers of the Center for Strategic Studies and Forecasts of University of International Relations in Łódź. The Center is an academic research unit, aimed at scientific research dedicated to domestic and international security and international relations.

tearing your countries apart, whenever we wish to have them. Poles, we warn you for the last time"[12]. The offers of Al-Qaida were not accepted by Poland, which was yet another element that had to be taken into consideration in implementation of activities to guard the state security.

At the time, Poland was a full-right member of the European Union. Although integration with the European structures had a positive impact on the internal and external security of our country, there could be no increased sense of security in the light of terrorist threats. In this particular case, the state security was influenced negatively by opening of the borders due to integration with the European Union. We joined the structures of the European Union on May 1st, 2004, and full opening of the borders took place as we joined the Schengen Area on December 21st, 2007. European integration of our country was definitely the greatest challenge for our country in the twenty years after regaining of sovereignty in 1989. The challenge was associated both with numerous opportunities and threats to the state security. Freedom of movement within the territory of the European Union, free flow of capital, operation of foreign companies – apart from benefits – brings opportunities for development of organized international crime, as well as numerous economic, environmental and demographic threats. Poland, as a new member of the community, with a large part of its eastern and northern border constituting the border of the European Union, became particularly threatened by international terrorism and uncontrolled proliferation of mass destruction weapons and the means of transport of such weapons. The socio-economic development, technological progress, increased demand for energy, accompanied by diminishing fuel reserves, results in a continuous shift of threats towards such problems as interruptions in energy supply or attacks on telecommunication and IT networks[13]. Nevertheless, membership of Poland in the European Union has created favorable conditions for its economic and civilizational development, thus resulting in increased state security[14].

It should be noted that the „European way of thinking" on security did not start in our country on May 1st, 2004. As early as on July 22nd, 2003, Poland approved the *Strategy for security of the Republic of Poland*, which contained an assessment of the state of security and the directions of activities, defined later on in the *European Security Strategy* of December 13th, 2003[15]. The authors of both strategies paid

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[12] Quote in: *Zagrożenie atakami terrorystycznymi...*, p. 5.

[13] Cf. T. Szczurek, *Problemy bezpieczeństwa przyszłości w kontekście rozwoju techniki militarnej*, (in) E. Jarmoch, J. Jaroń, I.A. Trzpil, (ed.), *Ewolucja koncepcji natury ludzkiej w świetle nauk filozoficznych, psychologii, teologii i politologii*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Podlaskiej, Siedlce 2007, p. 197-205.

[14] Cf. S. Parzymies, *Unia Europejska a bezpieczeństwo europejskie i globalne po 11 września 2001 roku*, (in) R. Kuźniar, Z. Lachowski (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo Międzynarodowe czasu przemian.*, op. cit., p. 361-391.

[15] *Monitor Integracji Europejskiej*, 2004, no. 70, p. 94-106 (http://www2.ukie.gov.pl).

particular attention to „asymmetric" threats due to progressing globalization. They pointed to diminishing of the difference between the internal and external aspects of security. Holistic concepts of internal and external security are ever present in expert studies[16].

In the time of systemic transformation, the most significant challenges faced by the state security system include globalization and informatization, organized crime and international terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, existence of high risk countries, free flow of capital and growing migration of the population, climate changes and environmental pollution. Another challenge for Poland is to ensure energy security[17]. These challenges are associated with numerous opportunities and threats. Proper exploitation of opportunities may result in increased state security. Membership in NATO and the European Union will become all the more beneficial to us, if NATO keeps extending to the east and south, and in the case of fuller integration of the European Union. There is a chance for stabilization of political and military relations, for multidimensional international cooperation and work to maintain peace on the continent. Free flow of capital, people and technologies should be perceived as an opportunity, although certain threats may also be associated with these processes. However, there is a chance for economic growth, consolidation of the society and improvement of the living conditions of the people[18].

At present, security of Poland is influenced most by its position in the NATO and the structures of the European Union; at the same time, it should be kept in mind that *the main feature of this era is the fact that security of persons and the society cannot be ensured without a constant shaping (maintaining) of global security*[19]. Involvement in international cooperation and integration with the „Western Civilization", on one hand, gives us a real sense of security, and on the other – forces us to counteract the threats faced by this civilization, posed by its enemies. Security of Poland is influenced mainly by:

- – political and economic relations with states of the region,
- – NATO-Russia and EU-Russia relations,
- – participation in the international coalition against terrorism,

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[16] A. Sekściński, *Polityczne uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego Polski w XXI wieku*, (in) P. Sienkiewicz, M. Marszałek, H. Świeboda (ed.), *Metodologia badań bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Volume I, Wydawnictwo AON, Warsaw 2010, p. 47.

[17] J. Wojnarowski, *Współczesne wyzwania i zagrożenia dla systemu bezpieczeństwa państwa*, (in) Z. Piątek (ed.), *Narodowy System Pogotowia Kryzysowego*, Defense Community Movement Association, Warsaw 2007, p. 11-12. See also: R. Kuźniar, *Niebezpieczeństwa nowego paradygmatu bezpieczeństwa*, (in) R. Kuźniar, Z. Lachowski (ed.). *Bezpieczeństwo Międzynarodowe czasu przemian*, op. cit., Polish Institute for International Affairs, Warsaw 2003, p. 209-233.

[18] Ibidem, p. 13.

[19] T. Jemioło, A. Dawidczyk, *Wprowadzenie do metodologii badań bezpieczeństwa*, AON, Warsaw 2008, p. 42.

    – destabilization processes in the Balkans and in the Middle East,
    – nuclear ambitions of states, which have not acquired nuclear weapons,
    – development of Islamic fundamentalism.

The economic dimension of security is becoming increasingly important. Powerful financial institutions are now able to destabilize the economy not only of the smallest, but also of large states. Energy raw materials are increasingly often treated as a „bargaining advantage" in relations between states, and competition for acquisition of energy carriers is becoming stronger. According to many specialists, mass attacks on IT and telecommunication networks are only a question of time. Very often, sources of threats are non-governmental entities. There is a growing threat of environmental disasters, pandemics of lethal diseases, the reserves of potable water are decreasing. It may also turn out a significant aspect of Poland's security that the developmental gap between various regions of the world is increasing; shaping of the political and social situation in the region may turn out to be all the more important. Such factors influencing the security of our state have been grasped by the authors of the current *Strategy for national security of the Republic of Poland*, approved in November 2007[20]. Of course, not all of the current challenges emerged along with the systemic transformation. Nevertheless, the changes of year 1989 led to Poland becoming a full-right member of the international community, which provides us with specific opportunities (chances), at the same time being associated with certain threats, faced by a democratic law-bound state, open to the world.

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6.   „Monitor Integracji Europejskiej", 2004 No. 70, p. 94-106 (http://www2.ukie.gov.pl).

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[20] *Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,* Warsaw 2007, p. 6-8. (http://www.wp.mil.pl/pliki/File/zalaczniki_do_stron/SBN_RP.pdf).

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Streszczenie. W artykule przedstawiono sytuację społeczno-polityczną Polski w kontekście zmian spowodowanych rozpadem tzw. „bloku wschodniego" po roku 1989. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na znaczenie następujących wydarzeń historycznych: powstanie pierwszego niekomunistycznego rządu; rozwiązanie Układu Warszawskiego; wycofanie wojsk rosyjskich z Polski; przyjęcie Polski do Sojuszu Północnoatlantyckiego i do Unii Europejskiej oraz atak terrorystyczny na Word Trade Center 11 września 2001 roku. Na tle tych wydarzeń, opierając się na dokumentach źródłowych (założeniach, doktrynach i strategiach), przedstawiono strategiczne kierunki działania w procesie budowania systemu bezpieczeństwa państwa.