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The Impact of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on the Security of the Republic of Poland

SUMMARY

This article is devoted to the presentation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the context of security of the Third Republic of Poland, as well as checking and analysing the potential threats related to the warfare in the east. Potential and current threats that may affect Poland's security were also presented. This article also measures the level of tolerance of people from Ukraine in Poland and how relations with our eastern neighbours have been developing in recent years. The most important issue is to provide the answer to the question whether the security of our country is or may be violated.

Key words: war, Ukraine, Poland, conflict.

Introduction

The very concept of security is a formulation that is hard to construct an unambiguous definition. Thus, there is no general or universal definition that can gain traction in the scientific community.

One of the more famous people, who worked to create a universal definition of security, was M. Dobrosielski¹. The attempts of the aforementioned scientist were bound to fail. Considering at least from the etymological angle, the very Polish word for security – “bezpieczeństwo” – means “without sufficient protection”². Thus, it can be said that the very meaning of the word “bezpieczeństwo” brings the essence of the concept closer to clarification.

Security as well as many other terms associated have both positive and negative approaches. Most believe that security itself cannot have any negative effects. This is erroneous thinking. Yes, the concept of security indicates to us that there will be a lot of these pluses. A positive approach involves both an active and creative approach to the subject towards

¹ M. Dobrosielski, *Wkład Polski w kształtowanie bezpieczeństwa Europy*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1972, nr 5, s. 6.

² M. Malec, *Percepcja bezpieczeństwa: definicje, wymiary, paradygmaty*, Warszawa 2006, s. 5–6.

the surrounding environment. This involves, for example, the desire to satisfy the needs of each person. In economic terms, one can see a dependence as well as a direct correlation with the pyramid of needs of the American psychologist Abraham Maslow, where the need for security is included. A. Maslow's full pyramid is presented as follows³:

- physiological needs are the most basic needs of every human being; they are related to at least satisfying hunger;
- the need for security;
- the need for belonging related to involvement in life, in work or being part of a team, as well as contact with co-workers;
- the need for recognition is related to self-acceptance as well as self-criticism. A well-developed need for recognition helps to satisfy self-esteem as well as self-confidence;
- the need for self-actualization is at the top of the pyramid and arises as a result of satisfying previous needs. It is included in the group of meta-needs.

Analyzing sample definitions of the meaning of security, one can see a sociological connection. "Security in the general sense is an inner confidence, peace of mind and certainty proper or falsely justified in circumstances leading to fear. It is a conviction better or worse justified, that in the face of various difficulties weaknesses challenges and threats, or at least their symptoms, the state of affairs – in which a certain subject finds himself – allows him to feel safe"⁴.

In attempting to describe the security of the the Third Republic of Poland in the era of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it is necessary to present the very meaning as well as the genesis of the country. In order to define the country, it is necessary to go back to ancient times and specifically to the Greco-Roman period. The very definition of the country has been described in political doctrines, such as⁵:

- patriarchal,
- patrimonial,
- theistic,
- conquest.

Just describing the country as a definition of the security poses problems, which is why one can find a huge amount of interpretations in all sorts of literature. One of the first people to describe the country was Aristotle. According to the most famous philosopher of ancient Greece, "the country belongs to the creations of nature, that man is by nature created to live in a state"⁶. According to Catholic social science referring to the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, he treats the country as a "perfect, self-sufficient, independent and self-governing community"⁷. A more understandable as well as readable definition was provided by German jurist, state law expert and legal theorist Professor Georg Jellinek. According to his theory, a state is "a permanent union of people permanently residing in a certain territory, subject to a supreme authority"⁸. According to the above-mentioned scientist, the basis for the proper

³ Maslow's pyramid, https://mfiles.pl/pl/index.php/Piramida_Maslowa, dostęp: 1.08.2022 r.

⁴ J. Delumeau, *Skrzydła anioła. Pojęcie bezpieczeństwa w duchowości człowieka Zachodu w dawnych czasach*, Volumen, Warszawa 1998, s. 9–18.

⁵ L. Dubel, J. Kostrubiec, G Ławnikowicz Z, Markwart, *Elementy nauki o państwie i polityce*, Warszawa 2011, s. 48–50.

⁶ Arystoteles, *Polityka*, przekł. L. Piotrowicz, Warszawa 1964, s. 16.

⁷ J. Kuciński, *Podstawy wiedzy o państwie*, Warszawa 2003, s. 4.

⁸ *Encyklopedia politologii*, vol. 1, *Teoria polityki*, red. M. Żmigrodzki, Zakamycze 1999, s. 218.

functioning of the country is formed by people, public authority and territory. The claim of the German jurist is correct and at the same time accepted both in the international arena and in international law.

Metodology and theory

The research methodology that was used to answer the question of Poland's security is an analysis of past and current events in Ukraine.

National security, which is twinned with state security, occurs in the wider literature. In the above-mentioned meanings, however, one can notice divergences or differences in interpretation such as those resulting from pragmatic connections, however, this does not pose a big enough problem and they can be used interchangeably.

According to Kukulka in the article entitled "Sprawy Międzynarodowe", a certain statement can be quoted, namely, "national security is the most important value, national need and priority goal of the activities of the state, individuals, social groups, and at the same time a process involving a variety of measures that guarantee sustainable, undisturbed existence and national development, including the protection and defense of the state as a political institution and the protection of individuals and society as a whole, and their property"⁹. The aforementioned quote by J. Kukulka represents the quintessential definition of national security.

An element that still needs to be addressed is the functions that the country performs in the field of security. Tasks as well as competencies as well as duties of the state were defined by British political scientist A. Heywood. According to A. Heywood, each state has the task of shaping and controlling many areas and he cited as the most important:

- education,
- management of the economy,
- social welfare,
- sanitation,
- internal order,
- external defense¹⁰.

The primary task of the state is to strive to create and ensure safe conditions suitable for legitimate functioning in society. One can venture to say that it is about a kind of mission. Attention should be paid to the political angle where both external and internal aspects should be distinguished.

The external function is closely related to and seen as the protection of borders as well as international cooperation with other countries to resolve conflicts.

The internal function is linked – as the name suggests – to ensuring security within the country and upholding its laws. Tasks that should be added raising the defense capabilities of the country as well as its military strength and potential, and this can be helped by, for example, concluding international alliances or military pacts.

The above-mentioned duties should be carried out through specialized state institutions as well as other qualified administrative bodies.

⁹ J. Kukulka, *Współzależność i sprzeczność interesów*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1982, nr 7, s. 29

¹⁰ A. Heywood, *Politologia*, Warszawa 2008, s. 107.

For the citizens of any country, an important element should be the effective management of the country in terms of ensuring security. This is a priority task and takes the form of institutionalizing certain activities. A manifestation of the above-mentioned activities is, for example, the creation of a specialized organizational structure taking into account both forces and resources available in the country – this is the so-called security system. The statement “security system” itself has lived to see numerous definitions and one of the best known is the one taken from the AON dictionary “an internally coordinated set of organizational, human and material elements, aimed at countering all threats to the country, in particular, political, military, economic, environmental, cultural, informational and social”¹¹.

Ukrainian – Russian relations

Given that the security assumptions have been discussed, it is necessary to analyze the relations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. It is no secret that the two countries haven't been on the way in terms of developing good international relations. It is safe to say that the Russian country has never tolerated or respected Ukraine. After the collapse of the USSR, all the newly formed countries – those that separated from it – had to find their way in the new reality. It is no secret that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed when it became politically and economically bankrupt. The aftermath of the collapse of the USSR during this period was that the newly formed countries suffered unpleasant consequences. One of the more difficult elements of the creation of the new countries was the need to create an entirely new national identity. Given that both Russia and Ukraine had the greatest population and economic potential after the breakup of the USSR played the greatest role. The two countries had a lot in common historically, culturally as well as economically. In the early 1990s, the Russian Federation became the strongest country after the collapse of the USSR. Between the Russian Federation and Ukraine there were and are many common features that characterize both countries such as:

- lack of democratic tradition,
- longing for an enlightened leader,
- lack of trust in political parties,
- rise of so-called power party,
- lack of a democratic system¹².

Despite the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation has pursued and continues to pursue as much expansion as possible. In the second half of the 1990s, it became clear that the Russian Federation's main goal had failed. As the years passed, Russia continued to embody a bipolar world, where it was supposed to be one of the major power centers.

From the very beginning, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia was also linked to infrastructural, political as well as economic and cultural factors. By 1991, more than 2 million USSR troops were operating in Ukraine. They possessed more than 1,900 nuclear and 2,500 tactical warheads. For each newly formed country, the supply of weapons of mass destruction

¹¹ *Słownik pojęć bezpieczeństwa narodowego AON*, red. nauk. J. Kaczmarek, W. Łepkowski, B. Zdrodowski, Warszawa 2008, s. 137.

¹² *Ukraine: How to Live with Russia? Ukraine: How to Live with Russia?* <https://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/pdf/ukrainarosja.pdf>, dostęp: 1.08.2022 r.

was an important element. These countries could not afford uncontrolled expenditures because they did not have the resources to do so and maintaining a military capability is very expensive, and Ukraine itself was obliged to hold nuclear weapons under strict conditions.

In mid-1992, the weapons of mass destruction that existed in Ukraine were completely subordinated to the country. Specially designated soldiers to handle the nuclear weapons had to take an oath of allegiance to Ukraine.

Ukrainian – Polish relation

In the context of the similarities of both Poland and Ukraine, one can note the rise of nationalist tendencies as a result of which the historical politics associated with both countries have been tightened. It can be assumed that in a certain context related to security, both Poland and Ukraine have become a kind of their own hostage to the politics of historical conditioning.

An interesting element during the war in Donbass, for example, is the very high involvement of Russian troops. It can be observed that the policy pursued towards the Russian Federation is mainly carried out on both unrealistic premises and promises without much coverage. According to M. Stolarczyk, one of the solutions could be to introduce the expulsion of Russia from Europe to Asia¹³.

It is also worth noting that for many years there were bilateral problems in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Going back to the times of the Second Republic of Poland, it can be said that the situation of Ukrainian citizens on Polish territory was difficult and in some cases even very difficult. However, it should be noted that Ukrainians who resided or stayed on Polish territory were among the most numerous minority. Polish administration made distinctions between Ukrainians who resided in Volhynia and those from Galicia. Poland introduced policies aimed at weakening the Ukrainian democratic parties. The weakened Ukrainians were unable to enforce any concessions from the the Second Republic of Poland. The author W. Łysek stated “Ukrainians – the largest nation without its own country – destabilized the international situation and negatively influenced the position of the Second Republic of Poland”¹⁴. The above-mentioned summary is a kind of quintessence of what relations prevailed between Poland and Ukraine.

Many years had to pass for Polish-Ukrainian relations to improve. The breakthrough came only after the end of World War II. Thus, it can be said that both Poland and Ukraine found themselves in a similar political situation. For 13 years, from 1991 to 2004, Polish-Ukrainian relations improved. In the early 1990s, Poland was the first country to recognize Ukraine’s independence. The Polish government quickly realized that if Ukraine’s independence was not maintained there could be further conflicts and thus a decrease in Poland’s security. Thus, our eastern neighbor was recognized as the main partner with whom Poland is willing to cooperate. Cooperation between the two countries was not always

¹³ M. Stolarczyk *Główne dylematy bezpieczeństwa zewnętrznego Polski w połowie drugiej dekady XXI wieku; Dylematy bezpieczeństwa Polski w kontekście kryzysu i konfliktu ukraińskiego w latach 2013–2014* [w:] *Dylematy polityki bezpieczeństwa Polski na początku drugiej dekady XXI wieku*, red. K. Czornik, M. Lakomy, Katowice 2014.

¹⁴ W. Łysek, *Trudne partnerstwo: stosunki polko-ukraińskie w świetle traumatycznych doświadczeń obu narodów*, http://www.profuturo.agh.edu.pl/pliki/Referaty_VI_KKMU/NSiH/P_125_AGH-VI_KKMU.pdf, dostęp: 2.08.2022 r.

easy and this was the aftermath of the fact that people still remembered the nationalist activities and did not forget the not so distant past. Over the years, from 1989 onward, more and more local conflicts arose. A sort of test of Polish-Ukrainian relations was the outbreak of the Orange Revolution. At that time there were presidential elections, which were considered by the Ukrainian community to be rigged in favor of Viktor Yanukovich. This led to a breach of trust and democratic election rules. Poland, wishing to support its eastern neighbors, first called on the Ukrainian authorities to uphold democratic election standards. Thus, on October 28th, the European Parliament sent observers to Ukraine to check whether the second round was held according to standards. However, it turned out that the 2nd round was rigged and the Republic of Poland did not accept the presidential elections in Ukraine¹⁵. The countries decided to follow the path of mediation regarding the elections in Ukraine. In addition to Kwaśniewski, of the famous names to be mentioned are V. Adamkus, J. Kubis (the secretary of OBWE) and J. Gryłow (speaker of the Russian Duma). Poland once again sent its observers to Ukraine to monitor the repeat elections. The purpose of sending observers to Ukraine was not only to observe the scope of the correct conduct of the elections, the other bottom line was that Poland wanted Ukraine to be an independent country because it was also related to the security of Poland. Ukraine was increasingly establishing better relations with the West which also affected relations with Poland.

When Poland joined NATO, it did not make much difference in maintaining good relations with the Ukrainian country. It is safe to say that this decision even reflected positively on the relationship between the two countries¹⁶.

War in Ukraine as a factor of Poland's security

Over the past few years, Poles have displayed an elevated interest in the events taking place and continue to take place there. The factor that led to the increased interest in activities in Ukraine most likely was the emergence of the 2014 conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine. It was in the Donbas that the Russian military unlawfully and unjustifiably attacked at the behest of President Vladimir Putin. This president of the Russian Federation can be considered the greatest tyrant and war criminal of the 21st century.

At the beginning of January 2014, the organization "Right Sector" was established and its commander-in-chief became Dmytro Yarosh. Yarosh himself describes the organization as a liberation movement. Just a little more than 2 months after the establishment of the aforementioned organization, there were already more than 410,000 supporters.

Due to the political taking place in Ukraine, a large number of citizens there have begun to go abroad to live a new life in peace. However, due to the fact that Ukraine is not a member of the European Union, leaving its territory for another country is not so easy in contrast to member countries. The Republic of Poland did not remain passive in helping such people and the country's actions came down to assistance in 2 areas:

- introducing assistance to migrants from Individual Integration Programs;
- supporting the integration of migrants as well as support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

¹⁵ A. Korniejenko, *Ukraina na zakręcie. Drogi i bezdroża pomarańczowej rewolucji*, Warszawa 2005.

¹⁶ K. Malak, *Polityka bezpieczeństwa narodowego Ukrainy*, Warszawa 1999, s. 95

The situation today in the eastern part of Europe has led to the fact that not only people from Ukraine are coming to Poland, but also Belarusians, who feed our economy. Until 2015, this phenomenon did not exist all that much compared to how it looks today. The Law and Justice governments of 2015–2016 were supposed to lead the Republic of Poland to accept only war refugees and not economic migrants.

Many Poles look at people from Ukraine through the prism of history. This is shown, for example, by the attitude of Polish citizens to the massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia where Poles were tortured and cruelly murdered by Ukrainians. For many people a kind of patch of a cruel criminal has stuck to Ukrainian citizens while for many Ukrainians Poles are seen as invaders as well as aggressors¹⁷.

The security of Polish citizens is the most important thing for those who govern our country, it is multidimensional as well as comprehensive. Its dimension is internal as well as external. Current threats to the Third Republic of Poland are primarily the development of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which is going on since February 24th, 2022. It can be said that Ukraine, after the start of the war, have regretted that it does not belong to any major grouping, i.e. neither NATO nor the European Union. The question that arises if Ukraine hypothetically belonged to NATO is whether the organization would have sufficient preparation for a potential military conflict. It could also be argued that if the war moved to Polish territory, the consequences for the Third Republic of Poland could prove tragic and could end with a potential loss of sovereignty.

Professor Stanisław Koziej¹⁸ believes that maintaining good relations with neighboring countries are most important in order to maintain the greatest level of security. Another factor affecting security is the emergence of so-called deterrence as the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, the conflict in Ukraine itself raises the question of what is the real strategic role of interests for Russia. As of today, the conflict is in the deep east of Ukraine; it does not pose a real threat to the Republic of Poland – at least as of today, but everything can change. The most serious threats posed by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict are, first of all, hybrid warfare as well as interference in the banking systems, so-called monetary systems, energy systems – the unpleasant consequences of this can already be seen, for example, in the price and general availability of coal – insurance problems as well as communication problems – ever-increasing fuel prices.

It is worth noting that Ukrainian nationalism was strongly anti-Russian and therefore it became convenient for the countries of Europe as well as the Third Republic of Poland¹⁹. Recently, the Republic of Poland has become very hospitable to refugees from Ukraine due to the war. From February 24th, 2022 to the present day, almost 3 million refugees arrived in Poland, who had to leave all their belongings and flee. Significantly, refugees as well as immigrants from Ukraine do not have major problems with integration at least in the Polish labor market as well as in interpersonal relations and Polish citizens themselves do not exult in superiority over those in need. When it comes to refugees taking jobs, Poland continues

¹⁷ <https://kresy.pl/wydarzenia/polska/cbos-wyrazny-wzrost-sympatii-polakow-do-romow-arabow-i-ukraincow/>, dostęp: 2.08.2022 r.

¹⁸ S. Koziej, F. Wołkowicz, *Podstawowe założenia polityki bezpieczeństwa i strategii obronnej*, AON, Warszawa 1998, s. 15–17.

¹⁹ B. Mendyk, *Nacjonalizm ukraiński jako czynnik destabilizujący bezpieczeństwo publiczne*, <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-c78b9151-26f9-4278-bb8f-33bc8193531c>, dostęp: 2.08.2022 r.

to be the most popular choice. Both war refugees from Ukraine and people from Belarus have become a kind of cure for the staffing needs on the Polish labor market.

Analyst Marek Budzisz²⁰ points out that Moscow would like to find an agreement with Europe through the so-called Steinemeier formula and also another attempt to introduce the Minsk process. However, for any agreement to be reached, the Russian Federation must be willing to make certain concessions. Russian rulers realize realistically that the longer the conflict in Ukraine lasts, the longer the problems of countries in western Europe will continue. As of today, both Poland and Ukraine face enormous challenges. One of the few pluses is that unemployment in the Third Republic of Poland has not increased as much under the influence of refugees as predicted. When the war began on February 24th, 2022, a lot of Ukrainian citizens who had been in Poland returned to Ukraine to defend their borders against the unwarranted occupation of the borders by the Russian occupier.

With the start of the war on February 24th, 2022, the security environment has changed. The level of Poland's national security itself deteriorated quite a bit. The aftermath of the security threat was a change in foreign as well as defense policy across the EU. It can be concluded that the problem in Ukraine became not only a problem for Poland but also for the whole of Europe. Poland, on the other hand, was somewhat forced to:

- increase the activity of the North Atlantic Alliance so-called eastern flank;
- support as well as some kind of initiation of the imposition of international sanctions on the Russian Federation.

If we take into account the increasingly slowing economy, it can be colloquially stated that Europe needs Russia not only in terms of potential purchase of energy raw material including, coal and oil, but also in terms of international exchanges. This is why numerous countries in Europe that have imposed sanctions on the Russian Federation and stopped cooperating are falling into an ever-increasing economic and monetary crisis. This is why the sanctions policy is suspiciously controversial and raises question marks about whether it was worth it.

The European Union, as a result of the conflict between the Ukraine and the Russian Federation, is facing considerable problems including a wave of refugees as well as immigrants. Due to the high density of Ukrainian immigrants and refugees, the aversion of European countries to people of Ukrainian origin is growing. A negative signal on the aforementioned issue was the referendum held in the Netherlands. The results of the above referendum indicated that tens of thousands of respondents voted against the embodiment of the Association Agreement with Ukraine. Thus, it can be concluded that many European countries do not want to help refugees from Ukraine too much and the reason for the situation may be, for example, the fact that this country is so problematic for Russia that other countries are afraid to expose themselves to the wrath of this country. In the main, fear is justified. In the worst case scenario, it could end with sanctions imposed on countries helping Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

Since the beginning of the conflict in the Donbass, Poland has had little influence on the development of the situation there. The Republic of Poland is not a member belong to the member-

²⁰ M. Menkiszak, A. Wilk, *Rosyjska presja na Ukrainę – wymiary wojskowy i polityczny*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-04-14/rosyjska-presja-na-ukraine-wymiary-wojskowy-i-polityczny>, dostęp: 2.008.2022 r.

ship of the “Normandy format” where serious decisions are made on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. In principle, Poland chooses to take steps only to support specific actions.

The question that should be asked is whether the Third Republic of Poland in the time of crisis as well as in the course of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict should fear not only the prolongation of the war and thus a longer economic crisis, but also whether it should fear that the war will move to Polish territory. Concerns arise if only because of the fact that the Russian Federation, ruled by the Vladimir Putin, has been able to invade and violate the sovereignty of an independent country without any warnings. The murders of innocent people carried out there are reminiscent, for example, of the already mentioned Volhynia massacre. Places, that the Russians are unable to take over, are leveled with the ground. Already a few weeks after the start of the war in Ukraine, there many saying saying that Russia will not stop its actions only in Ukraine and the next country in russia’s crosshairs will be Poland. However, it is not only the Republic of Poland that feels threatened, other countries such as Moldova, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia also feel fear and anxiety, but these countries are certain that relations will both improve and worsen after their accession to NATO²¹. The worsening of their situation may be due, for example, to the fact that Vladimir Putin won’t be able to invade these countries just like that because that would entail a potential World War III. However, it is impossible to predict everything 100%. In such a situation, another question arises, namely, should the Republic of Poland fear an attack on its territories by Russia in the next months or years? Poland has long had a unique strategic position geographically, one could even say that Poland is in a sense the heart of Europe. And conflicts between Poland and the Russian Federation had been noticeable for many years. However, they worsened in 2014 after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula. And since February 24th, 2022, relations between Poland and Russia have deteriorated even further, which was noticeable if only considering the lack of access to heating resources that the Republic of Poland used to purchase from Russia.

Vladimir Putin himself has a very interesting policy towards his potential enemies²². His policy is created on fear and for many years had a single narrator in the form of the Russian dictator. This was noticeable, for example, at the annual parade of troops in Red Square where he portrayed what a powerful Russia is.

Not surprisingly, the war in Ukraine caused great fear and concern among Polish citizens in the context of a potential armed invasion of Poland. No one would wish this scenario to see the light of day. Fear in Poland is fueled by more and more propaganda information appearing on the Internet. It is no secret that the overriding goal of the Russian Federation in both eastern and central Europe is to destabilize the region, with the aim of bringing disunity to the cohesion of the European Union as well as NATO. Moreover, the Third Republic of Poland can therefore be expected to fall victim to the destabilization of the region. As K. Jagusiak cites, there are several actions that we can expect and the most feasible ones include²³:

²¹ K. Jagusiak *Wojna w Ukrainie – implikacje dla bezpieczeństwa Polski. Czy Polacy powinni się bać?* <https://ine.org.pl/wojna-w-ukrainie-implikacje-dla-bezpieczenstwa-polski-czy-polacy-powinni-sie-bac/>, dostęp: 3.08.2022 r.

²² Ibidem.

²³ K. Jagusiak, *Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation as a Source of Threats to the Baltic Countries and their Impact on Poland’s Security*, doctoral dissertation, Warszawa 2021.

- attempts by the Russian Federation seeking to divide the Republic of Poland with NATO countries as well as the EU;
- attempts to create internal tensions that would increase destabilization in Poland;
- discrediting the Republic of Poland in the international arena;
- lowering defense capabilities;
- improving intelligence within Poland;
- spreading historical memory regarding Poland's division with its neighbors;
- computer attacks that would be aimed at increasing propaganda, disinformation and destabilization.

If an armed conflict between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland were to occur, sectors such as²⁴:

- social sector,
- energy sector,
- cyberspace,
- information and computer systems inside the country,
- local as well as central power centers,
- critical infrastructure.

The biggest threat as of today, which has been created through the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, is energy security. The result of not having enough heating material could be the harshest winter in decades. The price of aggregate for fueling is off the charts and beyond the imagination of economists. However, it should be remembered that many people are not and most likely will not be able to afford to buy 3 perhaps 4 tons of coal. The solution I would see here as well as would like to propose is the introduction of coal subsidies up to a maximum of 50 or 70% of the value of the fuel, depending on the number of people in the household and their age. For the elderly, e.g., over 60 years of age, an even higher discount could be introduced due to the fact that women from the age of 60 have the right to retire and, as we know, pension benefits are usually quite low compared to the prices prevailing on the market.

If we take into account the drastic increase in raw material prices, it may turn out that social security in Poland has also been shaken, thus leading to higher production costs and lower living costs for Polish citizens. Russia's overriding objectives are first and foremost the desire to fulfill its superpower ambitions but thereby reduce the importance of Europe in terms of security. If it weren't for the disinformation process – which I'm about to mention – everything would be well on its way to fulfilling the aforementioned Russian objectives. Vladimir Putin, in his dictatorial reign, made many bad decisions that reflected on the potential plans of the Russian occupier. The misrepresentation of the current state of the Russian military and also the state of the morale of the Russian occupier's soldiers was itself one big farce. The Russian military underestimated the strength of the Ukrainian army that is why they suffered huge losses both in personnel and those related to siege mechanisms.

²⁴ Klaudia Jagusiak *Wojna w Ukrainie...*, dostęp: 3.08.2022 r.

Conclusions

So why do I think that there is a fairly low probability of the Russian Federation invading the Republic of Poland? The answer is very simple. Vladimir Putin knows that Poland is both a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Russian dictator is fully aware that if even one missile crosses the border and falls on Polish territory, it would be tantamount to starting World War III. If this were to happen, all countries that are members of both the EU and NATO would support the Republic of Poland. So many countries would unite against Russia that there would be no real chance that the Russian expansionist would win on all fronts.

Attacking Poland wouldn't make much sense. As long as Ukraine puts up military resistance and is supported by most countries in the world, Poland can be calm in terms of security. The goal of the Russians is not to fight Europe, but to fight for territories belonging to Ukraine. However, there is a risk that if the Russians win the war with Ukraine, they will not stop expanding and will want to seize even more of its territory which may be a real threat to Poland.

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STRESZCZENIE

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Wpływ konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego na bezpieczeństwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest przedstawieniu konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego w kontekście bezpieczeństwa III Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, jak również ma na celu sprawdzenie jak i przeanalizowanie potencjalnych zagrożeń związanych z wojną na wschodzie. Zostały również przedstawione potencjalne jak i obecne zagrożenia, które mogą mieć wpływ na naruszenie bezpieczeństwa Polski. W niniejszym artykule został również pokazany poziom tolerancji osób z Ukrainy w Polsce oraz to, jak w ostatnich latach rozwijały się relacje z naszym wschodnim sąsiadem. Najważniejszą kwestią jest przedstawienie odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy bezpieczeństwo naszego kraju jest lub może być naruszone.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna, Ukraina, Polska, konflikt.

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