



*System bezpieczeństwa zbiorowego w XXI wieku*, eds. Beata Piskorska, Agnieszka Magdalena Zaręba, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2018, pp. 295

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The issue of collective security systems seems to be gaining more and more attention from social science researchers nowadays. Supporters of postmodern paradigms, convinced of the growing importance of non-state actors in shaping international relations, attempt to redefine the category of this concept. Nowadays, collective security notion is not limited only to the existence of military and political alliances, inter-governmental organizations or multi- and bilateral conventions and pacts. Extending the catalog of aspects of this concept to the activities of ideological movements, transnational corporations and even individual human requires the creation of a new theoretical framework for it. New and unprecedented threats such as international terrorism, cybercrime and environmental problems are also important in this mat-

ter. Therefore, when constructing a comprehensive picture of the 21st-century security status, it is necessary to take into account the aforementioned contemporary conditions of the international system.

In a collective work edited by Beata Piskorska and Agnieszka Magdalena Zaręba entitled *System bezpieczeństwa zbiorowego w XXI wieku* [Collective Security System in the 21st Century] a difficult task was undertaken to present the problem in a multifaceted manner. With the exception of two subsections and the abstract, the work is written in Polish. The book is basically a collection of articles written by various authors, which are divided into five thematic chapters. Although the scope of implemented research problems is very wide, the articles are very loosely connected, even within the chapters. There is a lack of a frames that would bind the work together, which seems to be making the work quite imprecise. Dispersing the authors' attention among many areas and disciplines

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(some chapters are of economic, historical or sociological nature) does not fully cover the topic and weakens the internal cohesion of the work. Of course, this is somewhat unavoidable in the case of collective work, however, it would be worth focusing on a more precisely defined research field, so that the subject of research is carried out to the fullest extent possible. Many of the problems and hypotheses posed are descriptive, but often this is due to the specificity of the topic chosen, and not to the inappropriate selection of methods and tools. The bibliography is rich and varied, although it would be more convenient for the reader if the list of sources was always placed at the end of a given subsection, since they are autonomous.

The first chapter entitled “Nowe uwarunkowania bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego” [New Determinants of International Security] is devoted to the aforementioned definition of a new systemic dimension of the examined issue. Its subsections, however, are purely casuistic – these are only four examples of events or processes that determine the shape of the modern international system. There is therefore a lack of a sub-chapter in which its holistic character would be specified. However, the examples given are quite diverse, which widens the research perspective. This chapter discusses religious fundamentalism and its impact on the development of international terrorism, the state of war-torn Libya, which after the fall of the Gaddafi regime turned into a failed state, the

issue of military security of the Scandinavian countries and the use of direct action by ideological and political movements on the example of the ecological organizations. Two of the subsections are strictly descriptive, while the other two are more inclined towards the formation of theoretical concepts. Historical analysis in the part of the chapter concerning Libya and Scandinavia was carried out thoroughly and on many levels, taking into account both internal and external determinants. The subsections dealing with direct action and religious fanaticism have a decent theoretical background, although they are based more on dictionaries than on scientific papers. However, they have a logical and coherent theoretical grid, which greatly facilitates the correct formulation of their own definitions and capturing the essence of the studied phenomena.

The authors of the texts included in the second chapter, entitled “Podmiotowy i przedmiotowy wymiar bezpieczeństwa narodowego” [Subjective and Objective Dimension of National Security], focus only on two entities: the Federal Republic of Germany, and the European Union. Again, this seems to be far too narrow for a research, especially since the first two sub-chapters are limited only to the soft power aspects in Germany’s foreign policy (the role of the foundation in shaping the image abroad and public diplomacy coordinated by the government) and the next two to the EU global strategy, repeating the same issue twice. Interesting, however, is their

analysis of four potential development directions for the EU, outlined in the report “The European Union in a Changing Global Environment: A More Connected, Contested and Complex world” that is meant to be the basis for forming its new security strategy. The authors, by analyzing the EU’s political, military and economic potential, and the current challenges they face, unanimously pointed to the likelihood of the Union taking a direction to move away from the archetype of the “civil power” towards the classic “global power” and the development of hard instruments of influence in international relations.

The third chapter is devoted to presenting selected concepts of collective security. Interestingly, only one sub-chapter deals with the theoretical approach, introducing the views of Michel Foucault on the issue of security concept under the liberal system. The content presented in it, however, is indirectly related to the issue of collective security, as it mainly refers to political discourse and the issue of power–citizen relations. On the other hand, the remaining subsections present two practical models of regional security policy of Great Britain and Egypt. Here we are presented with a specific and multifaceted analysis combined with an explanation of the historical context of the existing situation. In addition, the authors attempted to formulate prognosis about potential strategies that could be chosen by the countries they studied in the near future. However, the entire chapter lacks a presentation of concepts re-

garding the global security system. Perhaps it would be worth considering to include analysis on the role of the United Nations or NATO cooperating with other Partnership for Peace countries as stabilizing mechanisms and as a consultative space in combating new threats to international security.

The fourth chapter focuses on significant problems facing global security, whose genesis is geographically limited to the post-Soviet zone. Due to the superpower status of the Russian Federation and the ongoing war in Ukraine, this area is of particular importance for the international security science. Of course, for similar reasons, as equally vital for changes in the context of new threats, regions such as Middle East, Maghreb or the Pacific area could also be included in separate chapters, however, due to the geographical proximity of Poland and the impact of these phenomena on our country, the choice of only this region seems to be justified. The authors devoted their subsections to the issues of the Ukrainian nuclear program in face of the conflict with Russia, the diaspora of the citizens of the former Soviet Union and the Ukrainian war itself, analyzed in terms of the interests of foreign powers supporting one of the parties to the conflict. Therefore, they have presented a variety of challenges for the modern international system. While threats and challenges of economic, ecological, demographic, military, political or social nature identified by the authors do not constitute a full catalog of challenges related to this area, however, they point to

many issues vital for the countries of the region.

The last chapter, entitled “Wielowymiarowe aspekty bezpieczeństwa” [Multidimensional Aspects of Security], is devoted to three issues; the issue of the occupation of Polish territories by the Third Reich presented from the point of view of international law, the security doctrine based on national unity of the Polish People’s Republic, and the institutional dimension of the EU’s financial security in the face of the euro-zone crisis from 2008. Again, one can notice a wide thematic dispersal in the presented content, especially in the context of the chapter title. Attention should also be paid to some problems related to the concept of subsections. The hypothesis according to which during the Nazi occupation in Poland the provisions of the Hague Convention were violated, seems to be almost banal and too obvious. The content of this part of the publication is not very much related to both the research area of the chapter and the entire work, because it has a purely historical nature and its scientific problem is more legal than one belonging to the field

of security sciences. The second subsection, on the other hand, seems to belong more to the area dealt with under chapter three, because it is a presentation of a specific, historical concept of internal security, not its aspect. The last part of the chapter contains both theoretical and institutional introduction and a presentation of the practical dimension of the European financial security system. It provides the reader with substantial analysis accompanied by an emphasis on the EU financial system’s weak points.

The authors of the work undertook an extremely difficult task. Unfortunately, it does not seem to fully solve the main research problem, because it does not present a comprehensive and clearly outlined vision of the modern collective security system. However, as a collection of thematic articles, it is a valuable resource for many disciplines and thematic areas. It indicates some of the main issues and problems of modern world system as well as cover some of the least explored areas. The work could certainly be useful as a base for future, more precise research on the field of modern collective security system.