

harmful for Poland. It alienated and confronted Warsaw with the European Union putting it between the West and Russia. On the other hand, according to the author simple return to the beginning of 2005 is not possible. The new challenge for Poles and

their government is to create modern, open state which is able to play an important role on the map of the united Europe. Let's hope that Grudziński's book will be on the compulsory reading lists of all persons responsible for Polish foreign policy.

**Book review: Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*,
Oxford University Press, 2007**

by Rafał Riedel

Paul Collier's recent publication: "The Bottom Billion" tries to give an answer to the question stated on the cover: why are the poorest countries failing and what can be done about it?

Collier points at fifty states claiming that the real problem lies there, affecting circa one billion of their population. The sources of the decline in living standards are identified in four groups: the trap of a conflict, natural resources – usually being a part of the problem, less frequently part of the solution, the problem of being landlocked by "bad neighbors" and last but not least – bad governance.

All the above mentioned put together result in a situation that even in the 90s of the 20th c., when we observed the positive trend in global economy, the average income in those countries dropped by 5%. This is in average terms, the problem becomes even more intense and evident when we realize that quite often in those countries the growth produced benefits only a handful of its people. In fact, they are not only falling behind but also falling apart.

The author, being the former director of the World Bank, responsible for research and currently a professor of economics and Director of the Center for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University, represents a high level of competence and represents also the authority of an expert of a world-wide scale.

Worth noticing Paul Collier does not show even the shadow of clerical approach or academic pose of distance, as if from an "ivory tower" perspective. When reading the book, one feels the engagement of the author and his determination in persuading his audience, rather than lecturing or preaching.

The author uses a lot of exemplifications and picturous forms of explanation.

"The countries of the bottom coexist with the twenty first century, but their reality is the fourteenth century: civil war, plague, ignorance. They are concentrated in Africa and Central Asia, with a scattering elsewhere."¹

Paul Collier writes with noticeable passion which makes the book easier readable for

¹ P. Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, p. 3.

potential audience. The language and simple argumentation make it accessible for wider range of readers, not exclusively academics or specialists professionally interested in world poverty issues. Perhaps it is one of the major advantages of this book – being written by a well known, respected author, delivered with non-scientific, rather journalists' vocabulary, published by a recognized house, this piece of work might have a considerable impact on public awareness, much more effective than dozens of other – maybe well proved and research literature rooted – books of exclusive, scientific nature.

This is how you know an expert – putting complicated problems in a plain language.

“(…) Even the appearance of modern government in these states is sometimes a façade, as if the leaders are reading from a script. They sit at the international negotiations tables, such as the World Trade Organizations, but they have nothing to negotiate. The seats stay occupied even in the face of meltdown of their societies: the government of Somalia continued to be officially “represented” in the international arena for years after Somalia ceased to have a functioning government in the country itself.”²

Even though Paul Collier writes about the depressing reality, surprisingly when reading the book one can feel a potential of optimism in it. Why is this? Most probably because the author concludes in a set of recommendations that can or should be implemented in order to face the problems and successfully overcome them. In details, he explains which

instruments and how they should be used aiming at rescuing the fallen states and their population from the trap of poverty: international aid (wisely applied), laws and charters as well as responsible trade policy for reversing marginalization. He even dares to recommend a military intervention (accompanied with confession that it is the toughest part of the book) when necessary and for the purpose of maintaining the post-conflict peace.” It is politically correct to argue that the military forces of the rich countries no longer have a role in the bottom billion countries. Indeed for fear of arousing anticolonialist sentiments the French have got themselves into the odd position of maintaining large military forces in Africa that they dare not use.”³

Obviously a part of the analyzed problem lies outside those 50 states, for example in unfair terms of trade favoring the rich countries. Therefore the solution must be sought there too.

Certainly not everything is perfect in this publication. Some parts could be shorter, especially those giving practical, historical examples seem to be unjustifiably too expanding at some points. On the other hand, in some other parts the author trying to synthesize, gets trapped in simplifications that are not acceptable even in non-scientific writing. For example, referring to bad governance and economic policies, Paul Collier claims that the ceiling for feasible growth stimulated by getting the policies and governance right is 10%. Such a round figure has no satisfactory justification in the available

² Ibidem, p. 4.

³ Ibidem, p. 129.

economic literature. Certainly the general observation of practice could lead one to a conclusion that the vast majority of fast growing economies rarely exceed the 10% limit of GDP growth, however no one would dare conclude that this 10% growth depends in total on good or bad governance. Such a statement would ignore such influential drivers of state's economy as global trends for instance. Not to mention that transition economies – let us say, in Central Europe – provide us with empirical knowledge that high economic growth is quite often generated despite of (or one should say – in opposition to) poor economic performance of the government.

Also some pieces of advance acclaim put on the back cover seem a little too optimistic, if not over-optimistic. For example, George Soros' opinion on the book: "This is a path breaking work providing penetrating insights into the largely unexplored borderland between economics and politics" is understood in terms of general positive feedback on P. Collier's writing, nevertheless the publication could not be "accused" of path breaking character not to mention that there are rather few better investigated areas than the borderland of politics and economics.

Undoubtedly the book it is a synthesis and, by necessity, is full of generalizations, sometimes even simplifications. Nevertheless it can play an important role of a collection of arguments that is a provoking and consequently stimulating reflection on global problems touching almost 20% of our planet's population. It is a striking voice that should move the "rich north's soul", hopefully not only intellectually, but in result also into action.

"The Bottom Billion" seems like a book dedicated to those who work in development in particular, but also social sciences or economics. The truth is that it should be read by anyone worried about or aware of global challenges and it has a chance to become a part of a mainstream literature of the decade.

Those missing the boat get more and more marginalized, which makes it more and more difficult to escape from the identified traps, which makes it more and more unlikely for them to catch up. Living in a globalised world we cannot however pretend that this depressing situation is isolated, somewhere there... Both for ethical reasons as well as rational reading the emerging threats (for example: migration pressure), we should take Paul Collier's recommendations seriously and specially carefully go through the agenda for action.

Book review Jarosław J. Piątek, *Tactical Aspects of the Armed Struggle*,
Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2005

by Piotr Krzyżański

In 2005 Adam Marszałek Publishing House published a pioneer book: *Tactical Aspects of the Armed Struggle*, which intended to be

a briefing position about a not very well explored part of military history – the analysis of evolution of tactical factors influencing